

JAN 5 1953

# Childhood Education

**How Do We  
Face Problems?**

**January 1953**

JOURNAL OF

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**For Those  
Concerned With  
Children 2-12**

# Childhood Education

**To Stimulate Thinking  
Rather Than  
Advocate Fixed Practice**

**1952-53: The Challenge  
of Today's Children**

## Next Month—

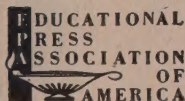
The topic for the February issue, "Who Will Help Me?" very logically follows the material in this issue.

Viola Theman, Northwestern University, writes in an editorial, "We are not alone unless we choose to be."

The Five Towns ACE Branch, New York, sat down and looked at its human resources. Result? An exciting article full of ideas.

Other articles and authors: "Straightening Out Our Own Thinking," by Melinda McCaulley, clinical psychologist, Philadelphia; "How Can We Communicate?" by Cassie Moorman, Springfield, Missouri; "Learning the Other Language," by Blanche Ferbeck, Ohio State University; "Evaluation—Everybody's Business," by Vanda Robertson, University of Utah.

The second section, "We Need to Write," was compiled by May I. Young and prepared by teachers, principals, and supervisors in the Philadelphia area.



**PRINTS —** Orders for prints (no less than 50) from this issue must be received by the Graphic Arts Press, 914 20th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C., by the fifth of the month.

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There is nothing new about fear as a normal human reaction to danger, real or fancied.

*Photo by Paul Krause, Springfield, Mass.*



# *Need Problems Be Fears?*

**T**HERE IS NOTHING NEW ABOUT FEAR AS A NORMAL HUMAN REACTION to danger, real or fancied. Men as well as children, youth and the aged are often seized with fear when meeting problems for which they cannot find solutions, especially when those problems are related to meeting basic needs—the need for food or shelter, for affection, for physical safety, for a place in the group.

In many children, fear stimulates the fighting reaction, deepens the determination to overcome whatever stands in the way of a solution to the problem. In many others, however, fear causes the individual to run away from his problem, or to become timid, submissive, introspective, a defeated personality with a feeling of inferiority and a withdrawal attitude.

It is the withdrawal attitude that is the most serious in its consequences for the individual and the most costly to society. However, the individual who turns away or even runs away from an unsolved problem may attack one which he can readily solve at the time and may return later to the unsolved problem with more insight and greater skill. In some instances, too, the escape mechanism may be the best one to employ as when a child sees a rattlesnake in his path or gets out of the street in the face of traffic even though his toy is ruined.

Let us ask ourselves as teachers and parents if the best preparation for meeting fear in our world is an environment in which children and youth are shielded, protected, and lulled into a false sense of security, or one in which they learn at each age level successfully to face problems. Let us help children to recognize their own fears and so far as possible to understand the reason for their fears—to observe, to test, to learn the nature of the feared person, object, or situation and how it may be controlled. Children thrive on opportunities to adventure with some element of risk. It is surprising what common sense even young children show if the adult has confidence in the child and gives him the chance to solve his own problems.

**F**EAR RIGHTLY USED AND WISELY CONTROLLED MAY BE CONSIDERED ONE of the native endowments most responsible for the development of mind, of moral character, and of religious faith. Undoubtedly it has been a major factor in the evolution of mankind. Let us in guidance help children to understand the needlessness of many of their fears, the harmlessness of many persons, objects, and situations which they fear. Let us help them to acquire the techniques of releasing not only themselves, but other children and animals from fear, and through friendliness, cooperation, and sharing contribute to a better emotional and social climate in their community.—EDNA DEAN BAKER, *president emeritus, National College of Education, Evanston, Illinois.*



*Let's look at*

## The Pressures on Public Schools

*This is not a defense against all the attacks on the public schools but rather a presentation of ways of working on the great unfinished tasks in education. Ernest O. Melby is dean, School of Education, New York University, New York City.*

I THINK ANY FAIR-MINDED PERSON WHO examines the evidence that has been presented with regard to the effectiveness of the modern school in America will be satisfied that the vicious attacks made against our schools are without significant foundation. School people, once they have been aroused, have given a good account of themselves on the defensive front. There are a number of considerations in relation to the present crisis in education that should have careful attention. For one thing, defensive tactics are dangerous to any profession.

For many decades the educational profession has been noted for being self-critical. Few professions deal with their own practices as critically as do teachers in conventions and conferences. It is now very noticeable that we are less self-critical than we used to be. The major reason is that we are reluctant to put ammunition in the hands of our enemies. We are quick to go on the defensive even when we are attacked at points on which we are vulnerable and when charges are made which merely indicate we have some unfinished business. There is a real danger that we shall lull both the profession and interested laymen into complacency in regard to such unfinished business. The greatest danger of all is that we shall be so busy defending ourselves that we have no time for the important business of improving our practices as they should be improved. If our energies

are diverted into defensive tactics, we shall not long continue to be creative, forwardlooking, and productive.

Not all of the criticism comes from those bent on changing the American social pattern or from vicious critics who do not believe in public education and would like to destroy it. Much criticism comes from worried parents who, perhaps because of the crisis in American life generally, the war in Korea, corruption in government, and other civic problems have honest doubt about the effectiveness of what our educational system is doing. In some instances, these doubts are merely expressions on the part of the lay public with regard to important items of unfinished business in the field of education. In other instances they grow out of misunderstandings as to what actually is meant by modern education, guidance, and core curriculum. In all of these cases our job is not to defend ourselves but to explain what we are doing and take the public into our confidence with regard to the unfinished business at hand.

I believe that the average citizen in an American community believes in a good system of education. He really wants this school system to prosper and to be effective. He would like, however, to be on the team as far as the development of educational policies is concerned. We should take him into our confidence, brief him on our problems, and get his advice about their solution. When his



advice is in clear opposition to scientific knowledge, we must try to explain the situation to him and prove to his satisfaction, if we can, that a point of view different from the one he takes has been established through research and successful practice. But we are obligated to listen to his criticism. It is appropriate and necessary for us to carefully consider the viewpoints of the people to whom our schools belong.

We should remember that the defensive mood is quite often an argumentative mood. We are likely to supply quick answers and are not always as ready to listen as we should be. In this respect, the defensive mood in which we now find ourselves is bad for our relationships with the larger community. Let us turn our attention to a few of the major unfinished tasks that confront us.

### *Attention to Individual Needs*

Few subjects have been more discussed than the problem of meeting the individual needs of pupils. Yet, in large measure, the problem remains unsolved. In too many schools the child whose interest lies in the field of music, for example, is less highly regarded than the child who succeeds in arithmetic. While we talk about the adaptation of instruction to individual differences, there is still much routine teaching and many children are not being served as effectively as they should be.

Our failure to meet individual needs of pupils is especially striking along emotional lines. Students of mental hygiene and mental illness are appalled at the statistics with regard to the high incidence of mental breakdowns and mental illness. In many instances, experts studying these fields trace the conflicts, frustrations, and the resulting schizophrenia to bad mental hygiene in our educational system. We know that

children need to have a sense of belonging if they are to grow into well-adjusted men and women. Many teachers have not yet established the rapport with children that is required if a sense of belonging is to develop in all the children. In our schools and churches we talk of human brotherhood and love of our fellow men, but many boys and girls are not conscious of being loved.

Much is said about neglect of the three R's, but I wonder if it isn't the child's personality and his real interests that are being neglected? Do we really give each child an opportunity to develop his abilities so that he can grow into the unique, creative human being that he has the potentiality for becoming? I believe that each parent wants a creative education for his child. Often he is unable to express it in words but I think that if we could talk to him about it in understandable language, he would be with us.

I recently had a letter from a mother because her child of seven cannot read. This mother probably does not understand that there are many children in our schools today who are taught reading at the chronological age of six although they are not ready for reading instruction and who, as a result, develop personality difficulties that will haunt them throughout their lives. This mother probably does not understand that with proper instruction and individual attention her child will read as well at the age of twelve as the average of the other children if the right attitudes are taken by teachers and if personality difficulties can be avoided. If such difficulties are allowed to develop, they are far harder to overcome than a slight deficiency or even a large deficiency in reading ability.

We must help parents and interested citizens understand the magnitude of our task in meeting individual needs of children. We must tell them about some



of the devices that we use and the success or failure that we have had with them. With this kind of thinking out loud on our part, we shall have the citizens' support in developing educational programs that are better adapted to the needs of individual children.

By and large Americans have given widespread praise to our system of free or private enterprise as compared to government control or government enterprise. If we believe in it in our economic system, we must likewise believe in it in education. In education, it means that we carry on our teaching and the life of our schools in such a way that each child has an opportunity to become all he is capable of becoming. If each child is encouraged to make the most of his capacities, then we can be sure that he has good preparation to participate in an economic order which seeks to liberate the creative intelligence of our people. But if we are to develop this kind of education, education must itself be free. We shall certainly not prepare boys and girls for effective participation in a free economy if they have not lived in the clean atmosphere of freedom in their school experience.

### *Education for Social Effectiveness*

No person who is well informed about contemporary problems can overlook the importance of education for more effective citizenship. We wonder that people who seemingly have at least a modicum of education make so little use of it in the responsibilities of citizenship. We observe their behavior and say they ought to know better than to do many of the things they do. And we wonder that the instruction we have given them has not affected their behavior more significantly. One trouble is that we have operated on the oversimplified assumption that "knowledge is power." There is evidence

to the effect that knowledge of itself is not necessarily power. Certainly it is not power for good unless the possessor of the knowledge has acquired also a disposition to use it for the good of others.

Here is a complex problem, for the attitudes which children develop are produced not only by their experiences in school but also by experiences on the playgrounds, in their homes, and in community life generally. Somehow we must find ways of integrating these various types of experiences. We can draw strength from homes, churches, and community agencies rather than being in a position where we see these agencies as competitors for the child's time and as being lethargic or often antagonistic to the school's aims and purposes.

If we are to be effective in education for better citizenship, if education is going to help us reduce crime, delinquency, and finally promote world peace, it must be the kind of education which influences human behavior. This means that the total environment of the pupil must contribute to the end of his social effectiveness. We must be in constant communication with community agencies, with parents, and in a position to influence the child's total environment in the direction of good citizenship education.

Certainly we will not develop such a relationship on the part of the public if we start with a defensive attitude. Rather we must tell our lay citizens what our problem is and help them to see ways in which they can join us in its solution.

### *Moral and Spiritual Values*

Closely related to education for social effectiveness is education that seeks to develop our whole value system to higher levels. Sectarian religious education cannot, of course, be carried on in public schools. But this should not keep us from recognizing the tremendous potential of



a public school system for education in moral and spiritual directions. It is my belief that American public education has contributed very significantly on this front. Yet we can be more effective if we ally ourselves more closely with community agencies such as the church, the Boy Scouts, the various voluntary associations, the press, and the radio.

I am fully aware of the efforts that teachers have put forth to teach the American way of life, and in the overwhelming majority of instances it has been a sincere effort. We must find some more effective way of dramatizing the meaning of America with the average pupil. And we must find some way of helping parents and adults generally to understand this same way of life.

We need to do a more thorough job of teaching the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and especially its Bill of Rights. But these must be taught in a dramatic, vital way and not merely as old and dusty documents which are trotted out for occasional examination. We must give these great documents a rich and practical application to the life of our communities on a day-to-day basis. If parents, board members, and citizens generally participate with us in dealing with such value problems, they too will acquire a better understanding of the meaning of America, and particularly of its meaning with regard to the nature and quality of our education.

### *Utilization of Community Resources*

We have barely begun utilizing community resources for education. These members of the community can enrich the educational program and through such participation become familiar with what schools are doing. Nothing that we can say to the layman in our communities and nothing that we can pre-

pare for him in the way of materials descriptive of our educational program will be as effective as an opportunity to share with teachers and children in an actual learning experience in our schools or in the community. Leaders in labor and industry, in civic and public life, officers and leaders in the various voluntary associations are examples of persons who have contributions to make.

If large numbers of people in our various communities have participated in our educational program we shall not lack for defenders if we are unjustly attacked. The point is that in view of our many current problems we should not be in a defensive mood any longer or any more of the time than we can possibly help. We need to be about the business of improving education and making it sufficiently effective to cope with the many problems which it now confronts. In many instances, we are so harrassed within the profession by vicious criticism that we have come to look upon certain elements of the community as critics that must somehow be appeased. If we could enlist the cooperation of many of these people in the solution of problems we would come to see them as resources to be utilized rather than as critics to be appeased.

To me, the most alarming of the various attacks on education are those which make baseless charges against the schools for Communist or leftist leanings. In most instances, the people who make these attacks wish the schools to undertake out-and-out indoctrination in some particular economic or political outlook. Most assuredly they do not believe in an education which is intellectually free. They do not want both sides of the various issues presented. They want one side only, the side in which they happen to believe.

We must deal with the Communist



menace effectively and not by fallacious hysterical methods which help us only to play into the hands of Stalin. Anyone who has been taught once by indoctrination and propaganda is a ready victim for another propagandist. But those who have been taught to think their way through problems and have learned how to apply scientific methods to the problem of making up their minds are not easily swayed by propagandists and agitators. It is high time that we understood not only the seriousness of the Communist threat but the methods whereby we can cope with it effectively. It is my belief that no totalitarianism, be it Communist, Nazi, or Fascist, thrives in the bright sunlight of free inquiry and free education. A corollary is that it is in the presence of thought control, fear, and character assassination that the totalitarian influences have a chance to grow. Keep the American public school system free and you have a powerful weapon against all totalitarian threats.

Often teachers are unjustly attacked. The attacks are often bitter, unsupported, and wholly unjust. It is not easy to stand up for what one believes in the face of widespread and bitter denunciation. It is not easy to keep serene and to remain determined and courageous when the price of courage and expressed conviction is the defamation of one's own character. Yet nothing is more important now than a courageous teaching profession which understands our way of life and which fights for it through thick and thin against Communist and Fascist

alike. If we have adequate understanding, a deep enough dedication, high courage, and effectiveness in allying ourselves with community resources, we shall ultimately win through for freedom. I think we shall win more readily if we hold to educational viewpoints that are scientifically validated and which experience has taught us are sound, even though these educational procedures may temporarily be subjected to attack. We shall not be successful in saving freedom by a precipitate return to an excessive emphasis on the three R's, to a process of indoctrination in the status quo, or to a hurried and badly improvised effort to teach religion simply because people are demanding that these things be done.

On the contrary we should enlist the cooperation of our parents and lay citizens. We should examine our problems with them. We should get as many of them as possible to help us with our educational programs. We should build a total program of school and community education which emphasizes the values that are representative of America. In so doing we will build the entire community into an educational enterprise that lives and breathes our way of life as related to politics, economics, human relations, and spiritual values. With this kind of an educational program in operation, destructive critics bent on changing the character of American society will have little effect. In such a setting, well-intentioned critics will get their questions answered and become resources instead of liabilities to educational progress.

**F**REEDOM OF THE MIND HAS SERVED AMERICA WELL. THE VIGOR OF OUR political life, our capacity for change, our cultural, scientific and industrial achievements, all derive from free inquiry, from the free mind—from imagination, the resourcefulness and the daring of men who are not afraid of new ideas.—ADLAI STEVENSON.



# Unreasonable Expectations

*What are unreasonable expectations? They are not always overexpectation, says Boyd McCandless, director, Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, State University of Iowa. He points out why we have unreasonable expectations in our culture and what can be done about them.*

**T**HE TERM, UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS, is double edged. Typically we think of unreasonable expectations as associated with frustration and failure. Our highly developed sense of social responsibility and strong social motivations are probably responsible for singling out children who cannot compete for the bulk of special service and curricular provisions. These are the slow learning children, the children with problem behaviors, the children with reading defects. Historically these have been the children who have been neglected by the curriculum, and it is logical, legitimate, and necessary that they be helped.

However, a swing too far in that direction results in unreasonable expectations for the generally able and the gifted child. An able child of whom too little is expected and required is as likely to be crippled by *underexpectation*, as is a fearful or slow learning child by overexpectation.

The vast number of undereducated but highly able men I saw among the Maritime Service Officer Candidates during World War II—16 cylinder minds trained socially and educationally for 4 cylinder jobs—suggested the term “occupational neurosis” for a good share of the group. At least a part of these men’s difficulty rested in the history of low educational and parental expectations for them.

There are also academically successful children for whom continuous overexpectation has been held by parents and

possibly teachers. These children, usually at severe cost, have incorporated their parental overexpectations and need special attention just as much as do those children who suffer from underexpectation. Also requiring careful attention are those bright children who have been relentlessly pressured because of their brightness, yet who remain academically unsuccessful. Frequently it will be found that their academic mediocrity is a defense against their parents and teachers—it constitutes their way of “getting even.”

## *The Cultural Role*

Unreasonable expectations are just as much the result of social learning as are reading skills and table manners. Our competitive culture leans in the direction of overexpectation. This bias toward too high goals has perhaps been responsible for some tendency for the present day curriculum to emphasize facilities for the child with “handicaps” as opposed to the generally able child.

Indications of the cultural emphasis on *overexpectation* are very clear. Every American child is touched more or less strongly, as have been his parents and teachers, by such cultural phenomena as “the rags to riches story”: “Every boy can be president,” “Every girl is a potential Cinderella.”

The net result has been to expect great things of children who are average; to regard academic retardation or mediocrity as a tragedy; for the community to expect the schools to work miracles; and



for many children to experience what must appear to them as total failure. And, while frustration and failure are, at least to some degree, inescapable facts, *total* failure can only be destructive.

### ***What Are Reasonable Expectations?***

Research in child development and personality theory provides us with some fairly clear answers to this question. Level of aspiration studies concern goal setting and expectation, and have been done with many types of child and adult groups. Typical "adjusted" or "normal" expectations appear to be: after success, the child raises his expectation for himself, for that task at least, somewhat higher than it had been before; after failure, he lowers his expectation somewhat; and, consistently, he always expects to do a little better next time than he did last time.

Similar research done with "ill-adjusted" groups shows that they veer irrationally in their expectations of themselves, sometimes lowering expectations drastically after success or raising them after failure and frequently setting consistently negative expectations for themselves (i.e. always expecting to do more poorly next time than they did last time); or consistently expecting quite improbable degrees of success and apparently ignoring entirely their previous performance history. These "ill-adjusted" patterns have been shown to be related to maternal over- and under-protection; to mothers' setting too high goals for their children; and to general personality disturbance. Studies have been done only with mothers, but there is no reason to think that in general fathers are less involved than mothers.

### ***What Is Likely To Result?***

*Reasonable* expectations result in success or reward more frequently than in

failure or punishment; and in constructive, realistically modified behavior rather than in unrealistic and maladaptive behavior. Contrariwise, *unreasonable* expectations produce unrealistic goals, failure, lack of satisfaction, and nonadaptive behavior.

Failure and frustration, depending on their severity, result in a number of behaviors, some constructive, some nonconstructive. Studies demonstrate that under some circumstances, frustration-failure results in potentially adaptive behaviors, such as increased effort, trying new methods of reaching the goal, and increased drive. However, severe failure, particularly that which is attributed by the child or adult to his own inadequacy, seems to result in such behaviors as withdrawal, passivity, temper outbursts, blaming of "tools" or other persons, fixation on the unadaptive approach already tried, random aggression, and fantasy escape.

Only increased effort and new approaches to the goal are generally constructive. They may not be if the goal in question is one impossible to attain; or if the method which the child has already been trying is the correct one. Increased drive may be utilized by the wise teacher constructively, but may in turn only add to frustration the child is feeling.

An additional consideration has recently been proposed by two learning theorists (Brown and Farber, writing in November 1951 *Psychological Bulletin*). They set forth the hypothesis that escape from frustration is in itself satisfying and consequently tends to consolidate the behavior that resulted in the escape, regardless of whether that escape-behavior is constructive or not.

As an illustration, the highly traditional and authoritarian schoolroom may be considered: a heavy proportion of



child goals is blocked in such a room (e.g. needs for physical activity, communication, individualized goals, self-determination, teacher approval, love and affection). This frustration for many can be escaped only at recess, lunchtime, or release from school in the afternoon. Consequently, no "educational" goals are reinforced for the child, but only goals obtainable through free, unsupervised, school-escaping activity. The net result, after years of such school frustration, is likely to be a population hostile to school and schools; suspicious of education, the educator, and the educated. The still existing caricature of the old maid schoolteacher, the stereotype of the child mourning over the first day of school, and widespread current attacks on modern education are not totally unrelated to the experiences of great sections of our population during their own schooldays.

Failure of the schools to understand and challenge the bright and able child produces frustration and hostility.

### *Constructive Steps*

- As a first consideration, the school should not concentrate on reduction of frustration as such. Frustration in and of itself is neither good nor bad, but simply inevitable. It is the behavior which results from frustration with which the teacher and the school can work; as well as the child's understanding of the cause of frustration. From the developmental point of view, inescapable frustration is probably bad; but escapable frustration is the foundation of education.

- A second basic premise is that teachers should know how children develop in general, as well as how the individual child is developing and has developed. In our society, first graders are desperately eager to go to school and yet are at the same time nearly over-

whelmed with anxiety about what is going to happen to them. Late third graders want desperately to learn cooperative rules and live by them, yet haven't the social and physical skills to do so. Yet a given first grader may have no anxiety, and another may be so overpowered with worry that his younger siblings at home are displacing him that he can attend to none of the activities of the classroom. A mature third grader may know all of the basketball rules, while another is at the developmental level of "run-sheep-run."

A general knowledge of the process of maturing, of personality development, and of physical growth is indispensable for the understanding of either a group of children or a single child. Yet only study of the individual child can help *him* specifically.

This brings us both to teacher-training programs and to the individual school philosophies. Emphasis on *methods* of teaching is barren unless there is also included a knowledge of *what* we are teaching—or children! A school management program is incomplete unless it includes provisions for each teacher to study each child and his family. The philosophy of the self-contained classroom, at least in the elementary grades, is an intriguing one and deserves consideration. The self-contained classroom is well described by several authors in *Nations' Schools*, January 1952. The provisions of such a room for home visits, two (or more) year acquaintance of a given teacher with the group, broadly shared teacher-child activities and interests, relatively complete developmental records for children, all seem to offer possibilities for constructive manipulation of unreasonable expectations in the direction of more reasonable expectations.

- This leads to the third consideration—curricular organization. Ordinarily

ily the American schoolroom takes care of the middle three-fifths of the children in it with reasonable adequacy. But underexpectations exist for the upper one-fifth and overexpectations for the lower one-fifth. Some of the remedies for this lie outside the teacher's power. When classes are too large, only a certain percentage of children can be given adequate attention, and ordinarily the lowest one-fifth monopolizes the attention that perhaps the upper one-fifth could use more profitably. But a carefully thought-out individualized curriculum with varied supplies of reference books and activities, planned in terms of the widely varying needs of *all* the children in the class, can go a long way to counteract this typical "drag toward average-ness." Of course, on the surface, the upper one-fifth demands far less than its lower counterpart. The demand of the upper one-fifth is more subtle yet as important—for challenge!

- Finally, a schoolroom, if it is to meet the demands of adjusting for unreasonable expectations, must possess the attributes of democracy and warmth.

These two terms have become hackneyed and stilted in many circles. Democracy is not pure permissiveness. Studies have demonstrated that permissiveness without purpose is more frustrating to children than any other type of atmosphere, including cold authoritarianism. Full permissiveness is construed all too often by children as uninterest in their welfare.

Democracy is guidance of a positive sort in terms of carefully thought-out goals, which are communicated to children in terms which they can understand. These goals include such things as academic competence, adequate social skills with other children and adults, assumption of responsibility, internalized discipline, and exploitation of such physical

and special attributes as a child may have. Democracy admits many goals—its single goal is not to reach the ninety-ninth percentile on an achievement test but is to offer a meaningful reward for those things which with optimum effort a given child can achieve.

Additionally, the introduction of "committee" and "voting" *per se* does not constitute democracy. Too often the naive teacher is simply substituting for his own verbal autocracy (or his sense of inadequacy) the autocracy of the biggest or the most skillful child in the classroom.

Likewise, warmth is not sentimentality or mawkishness, but is best defined as an honest liking for children, the manifestations of which vary with the needs of a given child. These may range all the way from a staggering slap on the back and the statement, "You were OK," to an independent little boy; to holding the shy and dependent child on one's lap while handling a reading section. Warmth must be a part of the teacher, and must be applied in terms of a knowledge of the individual child.

There is a use for permissiveness, too. "Good" permissiveness is that of the mature and well-trained teacher who is secure enough personally and professionally to realize that individual rebellions or failures are not "personally" directed, but occur as a result of multiple motivations. Such a teacher then looks for the reasons for them objectively yet interestedly.

Let us take the positive step of knowledge of child development, group- and individual-wise, in understanding over- and underexpectations. Let us plan to utilize frustration-produced behavior constructively, individualize the curriculum, and include sensible and sound definitions and practices of democracy and warmth in the classroom atmosphere.



## Guarding Against Defeatism

*Children can learn an attitude of defeatism—and often it is learned because of school situations. What can be done about it? Suggestions for accenting positive characteristics are made by M. Virginia Mason, state supervisor, Human Relations Classes and Elementary Guidance, Dover, Delaware.*

EVERY HUMAN BEING HAS FUNDAMENTAL needs which must be fulfilled if he is to attain emotional maturity. These needs have been given various titles by different authors, but regardless of the terminology used, the needs or drives are essentially the same. Without satisfactory outlets for these drives the individual becomes defeated—a frustrated unhappy person.

Instead of helping pupils obtain satisfaction through a sense of success, schools too often set up the barrier of continued frustration. What could be more frustrating than constantly meeting defeat because the goals set for you are beyond your reach, goals you can never attain? Is it any wonder that many youngsters "give up," stop striving, and develop the attitude of "I can't," or "I'm too dumb?"

If teachers really want to help their pupils develop a well-rounded personality and a resistance or resilience to pressures, they must assist them to set up realistic goals which they can attain and help give them feelings of success. Inasmuch as all pupils are not going to do identical work when adults—they are all different in their personalities, interests, aptitudes, and capacities—is there any justification for attempting to force them all to strive for identical objectives? We have been guilty of creating defeatism by demanding that all children develop the same degree of skills in all subjects.

An encouraging positive attitude and

example on the part of parents and teachers is probably the most effective safeguard against developing defeatism in our pupils. A third-grade teacher showed me a report card she had received from a neighboring school for a little girl who transferred into her class during the school year. Academic grades were low with failures in several subjects. Under Personality Traits four traits were marked "P" for Poor. I turned to the section for the teacher's comments and shuddered. The entire space was crammed with crushing, negative comments: "Janice does not get along well with her classmates and it is her fault." "Janice is doing poorly in her school work and does not try." "Janice does not play with the other children." "Janice is sullen and stubborn." "Janice is not friendly with her classmates." And so they went for every marking period.

"How is Janice getting along here?" I asked. The teacher replied, "See if you can pick her out." I looked the class over and chose a little girl reading a library book in a secluded corner. "No," the teacher laughed, "the girl in the blue dress is Janice." No wonder the teacher laughed, for at that moment, Janice, the girl who "does not get along well with her classmates" was working happily in a little group of four, all four children smiling, chatting quietly, and working together helping make holiday favors for the Junior Red Cross.

Then the teacher showed me Janice's current report card. The greatest contrast was in the teacher's comments—friendly, encouraging remarks, many, I am sure, mainly to attempt to counteract the previous teacher's harsh judgments. She had written, "We are glad to have Janice in our class," "Janice helps cheerfully with the household chores in our schoolroom," "Janice is improving in arithmetic and I believe we can help her if we try to develop an understanding of the relation of ten to the teen numbers."

When Janice read this teacher's remarks she could feel the teacher's warmth and understanding. She knew she was liked and wanted in this schoolroom. This teacher had succeeded in making Janice feel important and feel her worth as an individual. She had helped her gain a feeling of success. The teacher's comments had also reassured the parents, made them feel more hopeful, and suggested specific help for Janice.

### *Accent the Positive*

In another school a sixth-grade teacher and I were reading the written comments the children had made after a human relations class discussion of the inner human drives defined by H. Edmund Bullis. (*Human Relations in the Classroom*, Course I, Delaware State Society for Mental Hygiene, 1947). George had written, "My sister gets me in trouble all the time. My mother & father don't care about me. My Grandmom & Grandpop are one of them that gives me adventure & love." The teacher said George had failed the previous year and was repeating sixth grade. He had told his teacher on many occasions that his parents didn't care about him, wouldn't take him with them and his sister on automobile rides, and were constantly nagging him about his school work and comparing him in a deleterious manner with his sister who

was an excellent student. He got along fairly well with his classmates but depended upon them to include him in their groups, never taking the initiative himself.

It was toward the end of the second marking period, so I asked the teacher how George was making out in his school work. The teacher showed me George's report for the first marking period. I turned eagerly to the space for the teacher's comments—and found a beautiful clean blank. The teacher said, "Oh, I didn't write anything because I knew George would read it." "But if you had written a little praise," I asked, "a few encouraging remarks saying how pleased you were that George was getting along so nicely, don't you think the parents would have been obliged to agree with you and praise George a little, too?" The teacher, an alert young man who loves his work, replied, "I see what you mean. I was thinking of that space merely for the purpose of stating things that were wrong and for scolding."

Last year I visited a junior high school class where the pupils were working on homework and the teacher was marking report cards! "Just look at this report," she said, handing one to me, "isn't that awful? He just doesn't do a thing!" The spaces for the teacher's comments for each marking period were all filled with completely negative remarks.

I couldn't refrain from commenting, "I'm afraid I'd never do satisfactory school work and would be a trouble maker, too, if I received a report like that. There isn't anything constructive, anything encouraging or positive about the entire report." "Oh," the teacher replied, "I'll say something nice before I'm through." But this was the end of the fifth marking period with only one period remaining in the school year, and there wasn't one single positive, friendly



remark on that card. What incentive was she providing for the child to do acceptable school work, or for him to become a useful, contributing citizen of his class and his school?

"By using your ingenuity, can't you find something positive to say about him?" I asked. "Oh yes," she answered, "he's cheerful and responds quickly to nice things you do for him. Just recently I interceded with the principal for Frank and his gang who were always being punished for so many little unimportant things like running instead of walking to the bus. Frank came up after class and thanked me and said he wouldn't let me down after I'd helped him." We then wondered if a little encouragement and a few words of praise on his report for this attitude might not be an entering wedge to spur Frank on.

Of course, the use of letter and numerical grades may frequently be a contributing factor to defeatism. For years this has been a controversial question. Schools often attempt to justify letter or numerical grades on the basis of college entrance requirements. Regardless of the marking system employed, if teachers wish to prevent defeatism they must assist their pupils to set and strive for attainable goals and grade accordingly.

Merely threatening failure if the pupil "didn't improve" was a negative attack with little chance of being helpful unless positive suggestions were offered. A teacher's maturity, experience, and knowledge of the subject matter should enable him to suggest to the pupil and parents areas that need special attention, concrete ways of effecting improvement, and possible sources of help.

### *Children Need Help Socially*

Youngsters frequently need help in their social lives to achieve a feeling of

success. While academic success is important to most children, social success is of equal or even more importance to many of them. To a great many children social success is the most vital factor in their lives. Without it they consider themselves complete failures.

Being poor at games or sports may foster an "I'm no good" attitude. Or a defeatist attitude may emerge from the inability to make and keep friends, the lack of spending money, not being able to afford to dress like "the crowd," being ashamed of one's family or home, having far fewer privileges than one's peers, or almost anything that seems to set the child aside from his associates.

But here, too, the teacher who is alert to the many opportunities can be of valuable assistance. A sixth-grade teacher found through the use of a sociogram and a class acceptability test that Peggy was rejected by all the boys in the room and most of the girls. The teacher was at a loss to understand why except that Peggy did not live near any of her classmates, came to school alone on a public bus, and dressed and appeared a little more mature than the others in her room. Because her classmates did not welcome her in their activities, Peggy seemed withdrawn and lonely. The teacher, in attempting to analyze the sociogram saw that Peggy, who was excellent in art, had chosen three girls who were also talented in drawing and painting. The class was planning a mural in conjunction with their social studies unit on ancient Greece. The teacher asked Peggy, the other three girls, and anyone else who was interested if they would like to work on the mural after school one day. Six girls and one boy remained, turned on the radio and sang along with it, painted on the mural, chatted and laughed and had a grand time. The teacher finally had to chase them home after

they had been working an hour and a half and Peggy had let three buses go by. The next day this little group got together at recess and asked to stay again after school.

At the same time the group was planning Olympic games with the other section of the sixth grade. In the tryouts it was discovered that Peggy could outrun and outjump most of the boys in the room, so they saw to it that she was entered in all the contests for which she was eligible. On the day of the final games the whole class, boys and girls, were cheering Peggy on in all her events, and thumping her on the back when she won. From that day on Peggy was really a regular member of the class and no longer seemed lonely.

Some children need help in developing skills in games and sports. Their peers place great importance on athletic prowess and the child devoid of such skills may become a lonely, defeated child. A change in a child's attitudes can be a wonderful recompense for the time and energy a teacher spends in helping a pupil learn a few tricks—dodge the ball, take a better aim for the basket, or throw straighter.

The ability to lose gracefully is another skill teachers and parents can help children develop. It is difficult to lose if success is overemphasized, whether it be in academic work, athletic competition, or in social situations. If adults can assist children gain the attitude that it is the fun of competing and beating your record that counts most they will be helping to take the sting out of failure. If we allow success to become the all-important objective of every project, then it naturally follows that failure at

any project is accompanied by a defeatist attitude.

### *Teachers Set Attitudes*

Children often assume the attitudes they observe in the adults around them. If we have a defeatist attitude ourselves, we can expect to see it reflected in our pupils. Have you ever heard teachers say, "Oh, I'm just a school teacher," or, "I'm only an elementary teacher," instead of holding up their heads in pride and bragging with a twinkle in their eye, "I'm a teacher!!! If teachers and parents let every new situation get them down, give up easily, display an "I don't care," or "I don't think I can do that," philosophy, the children associated with them will pick up the same philosophy.

The school has frequently contributed to the development of defeatism and other behavior disorders by ignoring the emotional needs of children. Yet, theoretically, the objectives of the school and of mental hygiene are very similar. Both are striving to develop well-rounded, emotionally mature individuals capable of living happy, efficient, satisfying lives.

If the school desires to prevent emotional maladjustments rather than cause them, its program must be positive and constructive. The administrator, the guidance counselor, the school nurse, and every member of the faculty must be alert to the fact that everything around and in the school—each classroom, each teacher, each action, each word—has influence on the emotional atmosphere of the entire school. Only through being cognizant of the mental hygiene point of view and attempting to apply it daily can we overcome defeatism and give our children a sense of well being.

**IT IS NOT HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS FOR YOURSELF BUT HOW TO MAKE friends.—LAURA ZIRBES.**



*How do we help children face problems?*

## Are We Afraid of Permissiveness?

*What is permissiveness? How can it function in problem-solving situations children face?*

**ARE WE AFRAID OF PERMISSIVENESS?** Yes, many of us are. Many of us have not yet developed enough confidence-carrying insights concerning the potential stature of human behavior.

Why are we afraid of permissiveness? What is it? Just as discipline means many things to many people, so does permissiveness. As a matter of fact, there are many who feel that the one cancels the other, that discipline automatically rules out permissiveness. Some, on the other hand, have sincere convictions that permissiveness throws discipline to the winds and children into bedlam. When discipline and permissiveness are considered as operationally parallel attributes of a dynamic learning situation, they are no longer mere chameleon-like labels, but connotations for situational, behavioral changes in people who are learning how to live and learn in terms of the value attributes of their own experiences.

The discipline and the permissiveness observable and felt in any given situation are not the curtains controlled by the teacher or the parent for changing the scene. They are the subtle blending and stabilizing of human forces for solving problems within the situational limitations of the human and material resources involved rather than within the limitations of rule-ridden procedures and

command performances. When discipline and permissiveness team up, people and their problems live together in a value-quest for positive, wholesome adjustment.

### *Ruth Makes a Bowl*

"I have a problem," said Ruth. "I chose it myself so I must do something about it. (Commitment.) I said I would make a clay bowl like the people of the early ages used. Dirk said he would make one too, but we couldn't get the clay we brought from the stream to work. Our bowls fell apart when we put them in the fire to bake."

Sue, her older sister, said, "That would have been the best way—."

"Do you mean to 'incinerate,'" said Ruth, "that we did not try?"

"No," said Sue, "I was going to say that you may use my powdered clay since the other wouldn't work. You can tell Mr. B. that you tried to use the real stuff. I think he will understand. I can help you tonight."

"Mother, may I call Dirk to come over and make his, too? There's enough clay for him, isn't there?"

Papers and children and clay all over the kitchen floor. Good talk about summer camps in Montana and Maine, about Red's eleven new puppies, about the new teachers, about television shows. There was speculation about how early man must have done what they were trying to do with clay, and all the while the bowls were taking shape.

But bedtime came upon them, and there was other homework to be done by Ruth. Dirk's mother honked for him.

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Sue said she would clean up the mess since she did not have any homework to do.

Ruth settled her next problems this way. "I'll correct my arithmetic right now. Then I'll get up early to do my writing. Next morning at 7:00 instead of 7:45 a sleepy girl dragged herself out of bed, gathered up her papers from the desk, and curled up on the sofa to do her writing job. Her proudly impressed mother came in to see with her own eyes and offer her help.

"I can do it, mother. I don't need any help. Why don't you just go back to bed?" said Ruth.

"I thought maybe I could fix the dog's and cat's breakfast for them since you are so busy," said Mother.

"Gee, yes! That is my job this week, isn't it?" "You helped Sue clean up the kitchen last night, didn't you? I'll do it for *you* sometime." This little girl went to school that day with her problems under control and her sense of adequacy high for meeting new jobs the day might bring. True, she had help with her pressing problems, but she also had help in knowing how to help others in crisis situations. She had, too, the benefits of a permissive atmosphere at home.

Consider now what might have happened to Ruth. "Oh, no, I can't let you mess up the kitchen with clay. It's bad enough that you used the dog's water bucket and the fruit bin out in the backyard with that 'mud' from the stream. You just tell Mr. B. you'll have to do something else," Mother might have said.

Or allowing the clay-work in the kitchen, she might have said, "You'll have to clean up this kitchen before you go to bed, whether you get your other lessons or not. Either you aren't getting your work done in school or Mr. B. is overdoing this homework business. I'll talk with him about it tomorrow."

Fortunately, however, this particular mother had some values in mind which could give way to inconveniences, among them were Ruth's values. Some of Ruth's values had been fostered during the summer through participation in a special ceramics group. They were not being denied in this crucial situation where some further value increments were at stake.

Perhaps the teacher had overdone the homework business, but the parents were coming to the classroom the following night for their first meeting of the year. Teachers sometimes feel pressures from their teaching situations and from parents as well. Children sometimes are instrumental in relieving those pressures. When they know there will be times when their teachers will use their Saturdays for a picnic on the beach or a hike in the woods, they will gladly rise to occasions and meet deadlines. And furthermore, they will ask their parents not to be questioning the case. *Some* parents will respect such loyalty. Several did that night in that community. There was "give and give" in turn, operating on a number of levels.

### ***Bob Masters Arithmetic***

Bob brought to class at the start of school two arithmetic papers which he had finished at home during the summer. These he had done in order to have completed as much work as some of the speedier mathematicians. One who knew Bob well could not miss noting his diligence over arithmetic practice materials those first few days. The teacher said, "Bob, it's good to see you working in such a businesslike manner. At this rate you will not need to be finishing many papers at home."

"Boy, I think I can get them all done here. And *if* I do, I'll have time to play outdoors until eight o'clock every night.



Say, I am not going to use any help-sheet for multiplication and division either. I'm going to know those tables or else—!" Discipline of the self-directed, self-controlled variety was shining forth. Perhaps this happened because Bob's particular pattern of values as well as his pattern of development had been observed and respected.

### *Improvement in Written Language*

Bob and his group have the same teacher again this year under a two-year sequence plan. In their revaluation of their fifth-grade year, and projection of plans for sixth grade, the children had suggestions for improving their work with written expression:

We need to do more writing about our group study next year.

Some people need to meet their weekly agreements better.

Some people need to write better stories.

These valuations were the focal point for planning this year's writing agreements:

Keep the number of pieces the same—one each week.

A piece of writing means at least one page single spaced or two pages double spaced.

Improve the quality of the writing. This means—better ideas, better punctuation, better paragraphs, greater variety in expression, better spelling and handwriting.

Many of the value attributes of written expression are in evidence. The value increment points to an emphasis on "quality." Commitment is the key to operations for both children and teacher. Discipline is vested in an agreement-commitment frame rather than in the teacher as a person who might have said, "You will write such and such each week and I shall hand right back to you whatever does not meet my standards." To be sure there will be occasions when rewrites will be necessary, but such will get their sanction from common agreements about



*Courtesy, Board of Education, Cleveland, Ohio.*

Creative situational learning experiences.

responsibilities for individual and group work. It seems promising that value judgments in terms of value-guided action will be under cultivation in a functional situational approach to learning.

When teachers take advantage of their adult prerogatives they drive value processes underground. They are saying, "My values shall be your values and my standards your standards." Such teachers foster in children negative identifications with adults as well as negative attitudes toward school work. Children too often fall heir to imitative, repetitive automatic, and rote kinds of teaching-learning situations. They are thus denied creative situational learning experiences which have the full flavor of adventure and the resultful transaction which prevails in a permissive environment with values as guides to their lives, and with teachers as coordinators of values.

*How do we help children face problems?*

## Are We Overprotecting Children?

*Cultural trends have changed the pattern of child life but the question is whether we can distinguish between legitimate help and over-protection.*

WHO HAS NOT WATCHED A GROUP of children at work or play without experiencing sudden anxiety and poignant concern at the thought of the future, *their* future? It leads us to ask whether we are providing wise guidance in the hope that these children will be able to deal successfully with the problems of the atomic age, the age of not "one world" but possibly two.

In a culture whose patterns are as diversified as ours, perhaps only the cultural anthropologist can tell us whether the over-all trend is toward overprotection of children. Certainly there are tendencies in the culture toward overprotection, even indulgence of children. Only a few can be suggested here.

### *Cultural Trends*

Sociologists tell us that the pattern of family living is changing. The family unit is smaller; parental attention is focused on one, two, or three instead of five or six children. The implications for prolonged and closer supervision, for intensification of the dependency relationship between child and adults are self-evident. Closely allied to this is the lengthening period of economic dependence of children today. The gradual

shift from rural to urban and suburban living has its impact as well. Children less often play a role in the economic functioning of the family, accepting responsibility as members of the family unit.

These trends may lead to a kind of overprotection in the narrowing of children's experiences with those events whose meanings must sooner or later be found by each individual. Birth, death, temporary hardship, sickness—all these were perhaps less disturbing, less anxiety-provoking within the framework of a large and stable family group. These same events, occurring in the small family unit that must stand (or fall) alone, have often a catastrophic aura, and a uniqueness, that tend to evoke anxiety in adults. In wishing to spare children anxiety, adults often exclude them as well from the meanings these experiences may hold. Children are often sheltered if only by circumstances until these events are met in later life when they in turn have become parents of a small, isolated family unit.

Within late years has come the recognition of the importance of childhood in its formative aspect. This new awareness, if not balanced by a deep faith in children's capacity to handle events that are the stuff of living, may lead to an exaggerated fear of exposing children to experiences with a strong emotional impact.

There are other trends that offer opportunities for the child to experience realities in other areas, and stimulate optimal growth. Most striking is the op-

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portunity to express himself more fully, to come to terms with the interplay of his own feelings in the area of interpersonal relationships. The rigid control of adult authority prohibiting the child from honest experiencing and expression of his feelings is gradually being relaxed. There is greater tolerance for expression of negative as well as positive attitudes so that the child is helped to develop internal controls over his behavior, a more complete acceptance of self, and resulting self-confidence.

The school, insofar as it provides opportunities for the genuine give-and-take of social living, confronts the child with problems to be met and solved with sympathetic guidance.

Perhaps the most significant trend will be the growing emphasis on scientific study of children's development, their needs and capacities, and the gradual acceptance of these by the culture. Surely it is not by accident that the study of child development and psychology is gaining momentum in a culture that has committed itself to belief in the importance and worth of the individual.

### ***Legitimate Help vs Overprotection***

Those who work in close contact with children need an awareness of cultural trends, yet the more immediate and pressing concern is the constant process of evaluation of children's needs and problems. There must be decisions as to where legitimate help merges into overprotection. There is a large and ever-increasing body of information about children, and it is the responsibility of the educator to be familiar with it. The teacher is the intermediary between the parent and the researcher who gathers the facts and makes the observations.

Of fundamental significance is the concept of the child as a developing organism, and the recognition of the scientific

basis for the intuitive understanding that "the child is father to the man."

Gesell's monumental work provides us with a concept of childhood as a time of rapid growth. The rate is so rapid and dramatic during the preschool years that one is apt to lose awareness of the fact that the years from six to twenty-four are also growthsome. Gesell reiterates again and again that the same developmental interpretations necessary during the first five years of life are equally necessary in later childhood and youth.

The adult with responsibility for guidance must know what makes for optimal growth; he must be familiar not only with the generic pattern of development but also the individual's unique pattern of growth. Only then can he estimate with any degree of exactness the capacities and limitations of the child, how much the child may accomplish independently, at what point he requires support, and when achievement is literally beyond his capacity.

Viewing childhood as a long span of life devoted to maturation when powers for achievement are limited although constantly increasing, there need be no fear that legitimate guidance is "overprotection." Scientific laws of human growth and a democratic scheme of values sanction such practices as individualized instruction, self-competition rather than competition with others, the postponement of introduction of skills until maturation insures success, and a philosophy of guidance that is sensitive to the child's needs and capacities, rather than a philosophy that is oriented to the adult's preconceived notions of what the child needs.

### ***The School of Hard Knocks?***

There are many who believe in the value of the "school of hard knocks" for children. Their sincerity may not be

questioned. (We except those who, because of unconscious hostility, recommend austere, even harsh treatment for children.) It is, rather, their information that is at fault. Prolonged and intensive study reveals that children do not grow because of failure, although they may grow in spite of it.

Margaret Ribble's work with infants shows clearly what happens when the child at early levels of development meets unsurmountable obstacles in the environment and fails to find satisfaction and pleasure in his contact with the world about him. He draws back into himself, returns to an earlier level of development, sometimes resembling a foetus, sometimes resorting in extreme cases, to total withdrawal—death.

The older child who fails to gain sufficient stimulation for growth by means of satisfaction, successful and pleasurable experiences in the environment, resorts to behavior deviations, to juvenile delinquency, to psychosomatic disturbances. The child accepts or rejects experience on the basis of the pleasure it affords. His tolerance for failure, for deprivation, for withholding of satisfactions grows slowly, as does his body. And like physical development, optimal emotional growth is possible only when his needs at each level of development are met adequately.

There is no factual foundation for the belief that deprivation, or experiencing total failure at one level will strengthen him for a later time. Rather, the converse is true. Success and satisfaction in life experiences stimulate growth. Failure to recognize this (or ignorance of it) has led to unmeasurable warping of children's personalities. Scientific knowledge of the laws of personality development, not sentimentality, is the basis for the trend in education to provide guidance for the child, pro-

tecting him from the despair and frustration of repeated failure, whether in the area of academic work, social contacts, physical mastery of environment.

### Wise Decisions

It seems to be man's "precious bane" that he alone of all living creatures must face the decision over and over again of when to help the young of the species, when not to help; when to shelter and when to stand back. In the world of nature there is but one course to follow—biological needs of the young alone determine the treatment of offspring. It is otherwise with us, however. The mother must decide when to wean her child; when to toilet train him; when to comfort him, and when to let him cry it out. And later, the teacher must decide when to introduce reading, when to protect him from the teasing of a more aggressive child, and at what point difficulty becomes not a challenge, but a source of anxiety and despair. The wisest decisions grow out of a knowledge of what children need and how they grow, that is informed with a mature love for them.

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# Children's Ways of Talking and Listening

*Here it is in a nutshell—characteristics of children's development in oral language, needs children have for expression, and the classroom situations which make use of needs in meaningful situations. Margaret B. Parke is associate professor, Brooklyn College, New York City.*

ONE OF THE INTERESTING TRENDS IN elementary education has been a new kind of emphasis on the skills of oral communication—listening and speaking. More and more attention is being paid to oral language as a potent factor in personality development and the improvement of human relations. What the child does to adults and to his peers by the words he utters, and what they do to him are of increasing significance.

There is a growing concern over the danger of helping children attain language power unless desirable habits, attitudes, and standards of behavior are developed concomitantly. It is now commonly recognized that basic needs of children must be met if a firm foundation is to be laid for wholesome character and language development.

No longer is it adequate to teach the proper articulation of the sounds of language. Children must gradually attain an understanding of the power of words as they are used in ordinary life situations and as they influence thousands of people when broadcast on radio and television.

Today's children must learn to listen attentively, to analyze the spoken word critically, to question, and to accept ideas cautiously. They must learn to think in terms of the good of all and then to plan, to explain, and to convince others to act with them. This means using language to express and clarify what they mean and how they feel. Today's

children must develop the habit of meeting controversial issues in family, civic, and occupational circles openmindedly, wisely, and with poise. They need to understand and appreciate how the other fellow thinks and feels, and what the words he uses really mean to him. They must even know when and how to help him clarify his English. To achieve these goals teachers are seeking an understanding of what to expect of children at different ages and methods to use in helping children attain language power.

## Social Adjustment Characteristics

As children mature socially from one period of growth to another, new needs and problems in the understanding and use of language arise. Characteristics which commonly occur at different age levels (*Growth in Language Arts*, New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn, N. Y., 1946) can be outlined as a guide in determining what might be expected of most children in the age group. Children of similar age within a class, however, may vary widely from the pattern outlined in social and emotional as well as in language development.

## Three- and Four-Year-Olds

Through gestures, sounds, baby-talk, and ungrammatical sentences, three- and four-year-olds learn to make their wants known and to share some of their experiences with others. Although they are primarily self-centered and self-asser-

tive, with the aid of language they put themselves in the place of others and learn to relate emotionally to others. The way they achieve this task is important in later social life.

Dramatic play of these young children is almost individual, momentary, and transitory. They spend much time playing alone or beside rather than with other children. They do, however, begin to seek status in groups. At times this behavior is accompanied by bragging, showing off, or acting silly. At this age they enjoy imaginative play and begin to create companions and situations to suit their purposes.

If three- and four-year-olds want something, they expect it to be produced immediately. They experience frequent and brief conflicts with others and show anger when frustrated even to the point of displaying temper tantrums. They need much help in resolving such conflicts by means of language. They count heavily on adults, but it is normal for them to resist adults at times. This resistance is frequently revealed through blunt and straightforward language. When in the proper mood, they go out of their way to show affection to adults.

### ***Five- Six- and Seven-Year-Olds***

By the age of five or six, language should be a big asset to children. They learn to use more subtle techniques in opposing adults and respond better to reasoning. They refrain from making issues of many things that displease them and learn to maintain status in a group without displaying the silly behavior characteristics of the earlier period.

Relations with other children begin to count more as these five- and six-year-olds engage in dramatic play and in loosely organized games where leaders shift frequently. Many disputes arise among them accidentally as they get into

one another's way. They should grow in ability to resolve conflict by less hitting, more talking, and the use of more refined techniques such as ignoring, taking turns, and setting up priorities.

During this period, children usually converse more freely. Baby-talk and infantile expressions gradually disappear, and they learn to articulate all sounds clearly. They begin to report incidents in limited detail, to relate events in sequence, and to engage in large group discussions on topics within their range of experience. It must be expected, however, that they will experience difficulty in keeping to the topic.

### ***Eight- to Eleven-Year-Olds***

Through the ages of eight to eleven, children use language to help them grow increasingly more independent of adults and establish themselves with their own sex group. If given a chance, they will form social groups that will almost be a world of their own. They will develop their own speech patterns as well as mannerisms and customs important to them. Language, even the slang of the gang, takes on great importance. They form their own opinions and attitudes from concrete experiences and can be led to develop moral codes and to assume responsibility for their own mistakes in conduct. The competitive and organized games in which they engage can provide incentive for fair play. Dramatic productions take on formality, include a plot and sequence, and the content is often drawn from worlds other than their own. They acquire ability to plan a course of action, to keep strictly to the point in discussion, and to provide and demand evidence to back up statements.

### **Classroom Techniques**

Teaching the techniques and skills of oral communication is not something to





Puppets are used to stimulate conversation.

*Photo by Chester Photo Studios, New York.*

be left to chance. There must be careful planning and increased opportunity under enlightened teacher guidance for the exchange of ideas among children of different creeds, races, and nationalities. A description of some of the theory and practice developed in selected New York City schools is presented here.

### *Sharing Ideas in Conversation*

Mutual understanding among children is developed best through the genuine interchange of ideas in conversation and discussion. In these activities the two-way reciprocal process of communication functions to a high degree, and the cycle of communication is complete. Each person has an opportunity to be both a speaker and a listener in the same situation. He can clear up misconceptions as they arise or ask questions when he does not understand. When he listens to radio or television, he cannot talk

back and influence the speaker or performer in the immediate situation. The cycle of communication is incomplete.

To the extent that the school situation is lifelike, opportunities for reciprocal communication through conversation are provided, and needs of children are detected. Conversation takes place as young children paint at easels, engage in dramatic play, arrange an exhibit, eat together, and build with blocks. Troubles will arise, for the conversation of young children often centers at first around disputes. This is to be expected. The wise teacher does not interfere too hastily unless one or the other must be protected from danger. Usually the disputants need guidance to help them realize how to state their differences adequately and calmly.

Personality problems come to light as the teacher observes that Johnny gets into one fight after the other, Mary bursts

into tears at the slightest provocation, Ruth tries to dominate others in each situation, and Jane seems to prefer to be alone. Why? Before such children can be led to converse satisfactorily with others, it is necessary to understand what lies back of their problems. The shy, lonely child is gradually drawn out by help in finding a friend, by arousing interest in puppetry, by providing opportunities to talk out in a dark room when pictures are shown, and by encouraging the development of special talents. The child who talks incessantly often profits by success in other skills such as the motor and manipulative skills, by being led to understand his anxieties and fears, or by learning to take turns in all kinds of activities. To enable children to live together in their democratic society, the teacher today plays an active role in guiding social and work activities so that children converse and interact with a minimum of friction and a maximum of human understanding.

As the young ones mature, they may continue to need help in entering into conversation, in holding their own with different children, in taking turns and listening courteously, and in sharing reactions to their experiences in their own way. They can be led to identify and discuss problems which confront them such as:

Why do we experience difficulty in conversing with some people?

Why do we dislike listening to some voices?

How should we deal with temporary silence in conversation?

How can we express a different point of view without arousing anger?

Recorded conversations from life situations and from dramatic productions can be evaluated. Situations of concern to pupils in the class might be set up as a basis for role playing and evaluation.

Throughout these evaluations, pupils can be led to show concern for the feelings of others, to be aware of the appropriateness of remarks, to recognize influence of voice on emotions and responses.

### *Discussion with Young Children*

Discussion implies a much more formal type of activity than conversation. When pupils enter into discussion, they should be aware of some kind of purpose such as finding out what their problems are, planning to meet them, arriving at decisions, or judging how well they are progressing.

Young children vary in their readiness to deal with such purposes and to engage in large group or class discussion just as they do in readiness for reading. Too often this fact is overlooked. When discussion tends to ignore the most immature, they stare around aimlessly, suck their thumbs, manipulate objects on the desk, disturb their neighbors, or sit quietly in fear of punishment. Usually they could be more profitably engaged in other activities.

With some classes, teachers have difficulty in getting a discussion started. The answer often lies in changing the slant given to the problem to make it more appropriate to the children's experiences and in providing new experiences. In one class of underprivileged third-grade children, the teacher tried to lead a discussion to influence them to contribute to the Red Cross. They did not understand such concepts as Red Cross and the need for money in Korea. When the approach was made from another angle, the discussion moved forward smoothly. What might we make to sell at the school bazaar? What materials will we need? How will we get them? Who will make each type of thing? They had had experience with a school bazaar in previous years, and on many occasions they had



enjoyed making all kinds of gifts. The concept of giving to the Red Cross had to be built up by new experiences—an illustrated talk by a soldier who had been in Korea and a trip to Red Cross headquarters when the money was delivered.

Too frequently there is a feeling that English is being taught whenever a discussion is carried on. This may or may not be true. Practice in speaking does not necessarily make perfect. Nothing matters more than how the children are guided in discussion. If Billy is unchallenged when he makes a prejudiced or irrational remark, if Roberta gets off the subject and is hushed up in a hurry, and if Susan's remarks are generally ignored, the effect of discussion on these children can be worse than useless. Democracy loses rather than gains from the perpetuation of such experiences.

With young children, the teacher assumes the role of leader as they work on simple problems which call for immediate action. As leader, the teacher—

Creates a happy, friendly atmosphere.

Sees that the problem is appropriate for them and worth the time they spend on it.

Encourages as many pupils as possible to participate, but avoids forcing them.

Deals with each child according to his needs.

Draws out and encourages those who are shy. Tries to find something worthwhile in their contributions. Praises, but avoids excessive praise. Is careful not to cut them off abruptly.

Helps those who have something to say but experience difficulty in expressing themselves. Questions, requests them to recall experiences, urges them to demonstrate what they mean.

Avoids monopoly by overaggressive pupils without crushing them.

Deals tactfully with personal arguments.

Insists on regarding each person's rights at all times.

Helps each child to think for himself, to listen critically, to ask questions courteously

when he does not understand or disagrees, to say what he means, and to defend a statement by facts if challenged.

Knows when to draw facts from children and when to tell them.

Summarizes in simple language when necessary.

Brings the discussion to a close before children become restless and inattentive.

Discussion is almost certain to reveal weaknesses such as prejudices, difficulties in reasoning, reluctance to talk, desire to be the center of attraction at all times, grammatical errors, mispronunciation, misstatement of facts, overconcern with personal problems and inability to keep to a topic, inaudible or loud voice, indistinct enunciation, or foreign accent. Some of these can be handled on the spot without disturbing the discussion unduly. Time must be set aside to cope with others in terms of their urgency if recognizable gains in discussion procedures are to be made. This is what is meant by teaching as the needs arise.

### *Reporting*

Have you ever watched a class of children grow restless and more restless as one child read on and on and on from a paper, part, or all of which, contained facts copied from a book? Perhaps you thought the end would never come, but it did. The next child rose and went through the same procedure. Have you observed also how these reporters stumbled over words every now and then because their meaning was not clear? Fortunately the day for that kind of reporting has passed. In place of it are substituted procedures such as these:

- From the nursery school and kindergarten through the elementary school, background for good reporting is developed in other language activities. Children are urged to talk freely in many types of situations. In formal discussion periods they are taught to draw facts

from firsthand experiences and from their reading as they contribute to the development of a topic. They learn to express *their own* ideas, feelings, and values, and to differentiate between what they know to be facts and what they think or how they feel. In other words, they grow steadily in ability to differentiate between fact and fancy, fact and opinion. In preparation for reporting, these interrelationships with other language arts activities are highlighted.

- Children participate in planning what facts they will need and how to get them. As they engage in a variety of experiences such as taking neighborhood trips, giving parties, and making gifts, the need for information arises. They decide what they want to know, how to find out, who will do the searching, who will report facts, how they will be reported. These are necessary preparatory steps for a good reporting period.

- Fully aware of pupil abilities, the teacher guides the process so that each child has a chance to contribute in terms of his abilities and needs. Even before children learn to read, they are taught to acquire facts by observing situations, by talking to people, by experimenting, by looking at authentic pictures from which they draw conclusions, and by listening to recordings. As they acquire reading skills, additional vistas of information are opened to them. The acquisition and use of materials for research both with and without reading has come to be an important aspect of the teacher's work. Usually, too, pupils need help in planning how to present facts accurately and to achieve effective audience reaction. Shall the information be presented by one person in an informal talk with or without notes, by a formal talk based on an outline, by an illustrated talk or a talk with chalk? Shall a group report be a planned or in-

formal discussion, a debate, a dramatization or puppet show? Shall the report take the form of a simulated radio or television program and be supplemented, vitalized, and enriched by the use of songs, music, dances, or art work?

Providing for individual differences is a time-consuming job. In preparing to give reports, pupils often need help in seeing and hearing more accurately, in reading critically, in comparing what they read with what they have seen and heard, in delimiting topics, in finding proper words to express their meanings, and in organizing facts. Children responsible for specific assignments need the attention of the teacher before they take the time of the entire class. Nothing provides more incentive for willing participation in the future than success in the present.

- All of the children in the classes are guided in their reading and research activities to prepare to listen in an understanding way to reports to be given.

- The teacher supports the reporter or group of reporters so that self-confidence is developed as they stand before the class to present information.

- Both the teachers and pupils cooperate in evaluating the activity.

Pupils, under teacher guidance, point up ways of improving reporting periods in terms of strengths and weaknesses of the one under consideration. The teacher considers what individual or group help must be given and what lessons pertaining to techniques of reporting or the development of expressional or receptive skills in oral language might profitably be taught to the class as a whole to advance their progress in reporting.

### *Listening*

This is an area which presents many new problems to teachers because of inventions which have changed modes of



communication. Information which previously could only be acquired through reading can now be gained by listening to radio, motion pictures, and television.

Listening has always been considered and still is an important activity in developing appreciation of literature. The rhythm of verse and prose, linked with appropriate ideas and sounds, conveys meanings which are not apparent unless words are spoken. Now that children sit before the television screen or listen to the radio for hours during the day, the complexity of the problem of developing literary taste is vastly magnified. Then, too, information is presented by these new media in vital, dramatic ways. False impressions as well as accurate ones are implanted; propaganda is spread. Certainly as much concern must be shown today for developing taste and habits of critical listening as is devoted to the teaching of similar skills in reading.

To improve skills of listening, teachers have found the following suggestions helpful:

- Study the extent and nature of children's listening activities outside of school.

What do they listen to? How long?

What do they like best and dislike most?

What problems do they think they encounter in school and at home because of devotion to listening activities?

- Identify problems which children meet either consciously or unconsciously as they listen.

Are they getting a balanced listening diet?

Are they concerned with programs appropriate for their developmental level?

Are they neglecting sports and outdoor exercise, creative endeavor, and social activities with children of their

own age in favor of listening activities?

Are they developing new interests and deepening old ones and at the same time increasing vocabulary at a more rapid rate than they would otherwise do?

- Adjust teaching goals to pupils' needs and problems. Teach individuals, groups, or the class as a whole depending on the demands of the situation. When vocabulary is not understood, word meanings must be clarified. Bright children often ask for this help. One child of six said, "What is eclair?" When its meaning was explained, she promptly added, "Then what is 'I do declare'?" The child who heard "flying saucer" for the first time had difficulty understanding what the commentator was talking about for awhile. When meaning is cleared up, it is necessary to hear the whole talk over again, but unfortunately it is gone. This is one of the big differences between listening and reading. On the printed page one can go back. When children in a class disagree about what they hear in a situation, techniques must be developed for verifying the facts. This process, too, often presents more difficulties than are involved in finding an answer on a printed page.

- Control classroom and school conditions to make them more conducive to attentive listening. A discussion is not the time for two individuals in the discussion group to engage in private conversation or for one child to be carrying paper to the waste basket. Each child should speak to be heard.

- View listening in relation to other language arts, particularly speaking and listening. Inaudible speech, uninteresting topics, and vocabulary above the level of audience comprehension tend to create restless and inattentive listeners. Points of contact as well as differences between listening and reading skills must be recognized.

• Make maximum use of new equipment and inventions. Through the use of the recording machine, the children can hear their own performances and react critically to them. The califone has been used with some degree of success in keeping a group of children occupied profitably while the teacher works with other groups. With earphones attached to a record player, four or five children can listen to a record as it tells a story or gives information.

### In Summary

As age increases, the infant's uncontrolled outbursts of temper give way to substitute reactions of a less violent and more symbolic character. The child learns that language may become a much

more effective instrument for expressing feeling or for securing ends than the crude display of rage. Words may be more deadly than blows and more precious than jewels. Through them it is possible to express what one feels with less crudity but with greater effect.

The child learns, too, that it is just as important to be a good listener as a good talker. Distractions, inattentiveness, inaudible speech, lack of knowledge of word meanings, and similar factors result in many misunderstandings among people and in trivial as well as serious blunders in school, home, and community living. Life can be made better for all by improving ways of speaking and listening if wholesome character traits are developed simultaneously.

## Creative Dramatics for the 9's, 10's, 11's

By MYRTLE CRADDOCK

*Here is an anecdotal account of how one class worked out a play, and some suggestions which will guide teachers who want to try. Myrtle Craddock is coordinator in Social and Creative Activities, Winnetka, Illinois, Public Schools.*

A CLASS OF TEN- AND ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD boys and girls were being very troublesome—silly, noisy, and quarrelsome. They seemed to be pushing against the four walls that bound them and the adults who attempted to guide them. What could we do that would capture their interest and become so vital and challenging that their energy and creative power would have satisfying outlet?

In my experience a play has always brought enthusiastic response so I suggested it again; but how could we begin? First, we must find a suitable story or subject, a story that would offer oppor-

tunity for creative adventure, a story having real people with whom they could identify themselves and with whom they could live vicariously in much the same way as they played house, fireman, and cops and robbers.

We read many stories, and the children wrote plots for plays; but a short news item aroused the unanimous approval. It was a short account of a dust storm in Kansas and the disastrous effect upon the land and lives of the farmers.

In a short discussion, we decided we would try the first scene in a farmer's kitchen in Kansas. There would be a mother, a father, a daughter, and a son. The mother and daughter would be preparing dinner and the father and son would be coming in to eat after having done their chores. They would try to give the impression of the impending





Adequate play corners are important for six, seven, and eight year olds.

*Photo by Frank E. Gunnell, Staten Island, N. Y.*

dust storm and of its increase in intensity. They would act in the available space in front of the room saying and doing anything they thought of at the moment, anything they might feel like doing if they were these people responding to each other and the situation.

I explained to the children, before we began, the procedure that I thought it would be best to follow. There would be no permanent parts given out. All children would have the chance to play many parts. All of them would have the chance to help improve the play through their criticism. We would try to balance the time allowed for playing and criticism so that neither would take much over five minutes.

The first group giggled and shuffled through the act with very little imagination. I waited until I had seen one small bit of creative thinking before calling, "Curtain!"

Then there was a burst of negative criticism. "They laughed all the time. They were silly!"

I stopped them with, "Let's hear the positive criticism first. What did you see that was good enough to build on, something we might keep in the play?"

There was silence. No one had seen anything. This time I told them what I had seen. (I did not have to do so again.) The daughter had done some creative thinking. She had brought in a basket of eggs and had tripped and

broken them. Could we not use this idea? How could this act forward the plot of the play? How might the mother respond? What would the daughter do? How would she feel? Then ideas began to come from the group. They might show that they were very poor because they had been through so many dust storms that their land was nearly ruined. They could show that they could not afford to lose the eggs.

The next group played with more feeling and less self-consciousness, and so it continued with each performance new ideas being added. A peddler was brought into the play. He came out of the storm to rest and contributed important information about a more fertile farm in a neighboring state. His geography was confused and research was needed to discover the farm products of other areas. The family decided to pile the most essential belongings on their old jalopy and move to better land.

Three possible scenes were suggested: one in the jalopy; another at a gas station where they had run out of gasoline and were having engine trouble; and a third scene in a strawberry field with the whole family picking strawberries to earn enough money for gasoline to take them to the next place.

This time we divided into three groups each of which would work out a scene to present to the whole group for approval. Each group chose a leader and went to work in a different part of the room. It was noisy but purposeful. A pattern of procedure had been learned through the experience gained in preparing the first act together. A feeling of whole group consciousness was growing. Each committee now tried to give its best for whole group approval.

The strawberry pickers were ready first. They presented their act, pretending to pick strawberries, slyly eating

some, complaining because of aching backs; and they did not appear too unhappy when the overseer fired them because they had not picked fast enough and had eaten too many berries.

One boy thought that strawberries grew on trees and could not understand why they were crawling around on the floor. More research was needed as the play progressed. He looked up strawberry plants, others needed information about dust storms and soil conservation.

There was much fun and experience in constructing the car that could be driven on the stage with the whole family riding in it. A gas pump needed to be constructed and backdrops painted on strips of brown wrapping paper. The lighting must be planned and the stage crew organized.

By the time the play was ready, all of the children could play any part. There was no embarrassment caused by fear of forgotten lines. One could make up new things to do and say even at the final performance. Enough scenes and characters were added so that with two performances, everyone could have a speaking part and a helping part as stage hand, curtain puller, or light manager.

With this procedure the children had much experience in the language arts. Creative speech both for actors and critics began to flow spontaneously. The children spoke with enthusiasm and listened with interest and purpose. New things were being said worth listening to. It was not as dull as a language period with formal recitation. And every day there was practice in learning the democratic process of solving group problems.

Creative dramatics is a natural way for children to learn. If left alone, a group of children in their play will dramatize cops and robbers, Indians, and they will play school, play house, post-



man, and train. In this play they are seeking to live vicariously the lives of the people they are seeking to understand.

As educators we have usually cut off this natural process of living. The dull process of questions and answers recited or written takes the place of the exciting adventure of dramatization. Teachers talk about difficulty with discipline. Some teachers use the control of the circus master in the lion's cage, they snap the whip and lash out with words to make the performers toe the line. The others, those usually considered the better teachers, become snake charmers. If they can do neither, there is chaos. However, if children are allowed to follow their natural play instincts, much of the difficulty with discipline disappears.

It is not only children with obvious difficulty that will profit through dramatic experience. I have seen large groups of children, so restrained, such perfect little puppets of good behavior, and I have wondered what they were really like when they had the pressure taken off. It is when children are working with each other that we as teachers can discover the individual personality problems and can then attempt to help to overcome them.

### Guides for Teachers

*Adequate play corners for six- seven- and eight-year-old children.* At the six, seven, and eight year stage of growth emphasis is on dramatic play. Children of this age can help to provide their own play equipment from orange crates and cartons. They can build playhouse furniture, a post office, grocery store, Indian pueblo, hogan, barn, or farm.

*Stimulation and enrichment of dramatic play may be added for six- seven- and eight-year-old children.* There is need for discussion or story material before

play starts. For example, in playing house the routine of serving meals, putting the baby to bed, and going visiting will become dull and children might lose interest. A teacher might say, "We could pretend that there will be a surprise in our play today. What do you suppose it is going to be." Or, "The baby is sick. What will we do?" One might read a story such as *Chee Wee* by Grace Moon. As new episodes appear in the story, they will be played each day in and around the pueblo.

*It is better for six- and seven-year-old children to play spontaneously with each other without an audience.* Too early performance for an audience is apt to be stilted, and to develop fear and self-consciousness. Occasionally it develops exhibitionism. The transition stage might come at the age of about eight. Shadow shows, puppet shows, and pantomime are advisable for this age.

*Right kind of story material used.* Too frequently fairy tales are used as the story material to stimulate dramatic expression. Dramatization offers the opportunity for broadening the social consciousness. One can step into the past and live vicariously the lives of people who have contributed to our welfare. Teachers too often have a misconception that fairy tales are more fun for children to act, and that stories which develop social consciousness would be dull. This would be true if emphasis is given to chronological or factual learnings, but there are wonderful books with stories of adventure in living that capture a child's fancy and imagination, and stimulate in him a desire for further reading and research:

*Judy's Journey, Blue Ridge Billy, and Prairie School* by Lois Lenski; *Gabriel and the Hour Book* by Stein; *The Tangled Web* by Urbahns; *Benjamin West and His Cat Grimalkin* by Marguerite Henry; *Tom Sawyer*

by Mark Twain; *Chee Wee* by Grace Moon; *The Little House in the Big Woods* by Wilder; *Blue Willow* by Doris Gates; *Mr. Popper's Penguins* by Atwater; *Secret of the Ancient Oak* by Wolo; *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes; *Homer Price* by McCloskey; *Good Master* by Kate Seredy are examples.

Many stories which have high literary value are not stories suitable for dramatization. Many such stories are dependent upon the structure of sentences or the beautiful verbal expression for their value. Memorization of parts lessens the possibility for creative language expression and brings about fear and self-consciousness in dramatic expression for children under sixth grade.

Fairy tales have value for short time dramatic expression often combined with music and rhythmic bodily movement, but the time consumed in making such a story the basis for a major activity is wasted.

Not all stories with social studies content need develop into full stage productions. The dramatization of an incident in a story for a day or two can have exceedingly great value even though never considered for complete play production.

Stories which cause embarrassment and discomfort for the child of nine, ten, and eleven should be avoided. Many times children become riotous through embarrassment due to too close physical contact between boy and girl. For example, girl binding up boy's wound in leg. Also sentimental father-mother relationship, or love and marriage should be avoided.

*It is better not to divide the group into committees for working out a "little play."* The value of creative dramatics for whole group consciousness is lost by this procedure. It suggests the wrong interpretation of the word "committee."

*Have flexibility in part selection.* Choosing parts at the beginning of the

planning limits possibilities for growth in spoken language and in the development of social consciousness among peers.

*Performance date should not be set too soon.* Many plays are given to satisfy the request of the principal for an assembly program. The play should start from the needs and interest of the group and continue as long as it offers opportunity for educational growth, and be announced for an audience only when it has developed to the point when it is ready to be shared.

*It is better not to write plays for the group to act.* The plot, or poems and songs which are included in the play might be written, but the practice of memorizing lines in plays given by children ages nine to eleven defeats the educational purposes and causes the performances to be stilted.

*Balance length of time for discussion and performance during play building.* If the time for performance in the early stages lasts longer than five minutes the audience is apt to lose its value for helpful criticism. If discussion is too long, not enough children have opportunity to act. Likewise if cut off too soon, helpful creative thinking is lost.

*Limit the number of children acting at one time in a small space during the first stages of play building.* Where the only available space is the small space in front of the average classroom or the center of the floor if chairs can be pushed back, not more than five children acting at one time is advisable.

Yes, creative dramatics is a fundamental educational force and could be used to a much greater educational force than is now practiced. It captures the interest of children and challenges their energy and creative power and provides a satisfying outlet.





highway to the Stars.

Photo by Hopwood, Denver

## Friday, April 10, is excursion day in Denver—

### *Colorado Springs*

This all-day tour includes Colorado Springs, Garden of the Gods, Pike's Peak, Manitou Springs, Cave of the Winds, Ute Pass highway to Pike's Peak highway. Glen Cove, ski area for this region, will be included—snow conditions permitting. (\$11.50)

### *Large Circle*

Takes from six to seven hours and costs about \$8. This is the Short Circle Trip, with the addition of Central City, its Opera House and historic hotels; and Echo Lake, one of the loveliest Colorado lakes.

### *City of Denver*

This trip takes one and a half hours. It includes a tour of the business section; Civic Center with the State Building; residential sections, several parks and schools. (\$1.75)

### *Short Circle*

Included in this four-hour trip are Lookout Mountain with its famous lariat trail; the tomb of Buffalo Bill Cody, the famous Indian Scout; Pahaska Tepee with relics of Cody and the Indians of his day; Bergen Park, gateway to Mount Evans highway, the highest auto-

mobile road in North America. Also included are Evergreen, famous for ice skating; beautiful Bear Creek Canyon, the Red Rocks Amphitheater known for the natural acoustics. (\$4.60)

### *Winter Park*

This is the only trip made by train. The train will be chartered for ACEI exclusively and will have a snack car. Trip is through forty tunnels including the Moffat Tunnel. Chair lift will be operating over the ski run. Skis may be rented. Tickets are \$2.50 for the train and \$1.50 for the lunch.

### *Estes Park*

The all-day tour goes through Big Thompson Canyon, to Estes Park village returning by way of South St. Vrain to Boulder, home of the University of Colorado. From Boulder to Denver on the new Turnpike. (\$8.05)

### *Greeley*

This all-day trip costs about \$3. Colorado State College of Education is located in Greeley, about 53 miles from Denver. A visit to the college laboratory school will be made.

All prices subject to change.

## ACEI Study Conference, Denver, Colorado, April 5-10

# NEWS and REVIEWS

## News HERE and THERE . . .

By FRANCES HAMILTON

### *New ACE Branches*

Columbia Heights Association for Childhood Education, Colorado  
Stephens County Association for Childhood Education, Oklahoma

### *Reinstated*

Montgomery County Association for Childhood Education, Tennessee

### *Life Members*

ACEI welcomes the following people as life members of the Association:

Mary Louise Beverly, Akron, Ohio  
Virginia I. Deane, Logansport, Indiana  
Helen Bernice Hiss, Seattle, Washington  
Chloe E. Millikan, Maryville, Missouri

### *Changes*

Beryl Parker, a former secretary-treasurer of ACEI, is now editor of *Junior American Citizen*, a publication of Scholastic Corporation, New York City. Miss Parker was recently editor of *Arts in Childhood* and has been living in Nashville, Tennessee.

Kenneth E. Howe, for the past year educational consultant for the supreme command for the allied powers in Japan, has been named director of the Children's School at National College of Education, Evanston, Illinois.

### *Chloe Millikan Honored*

On November 1, 1952, Chloe Millikan, nationally known in the early childhood-education field of teacher education, Northwest Missouri State College, Maryville, was honored at a luncheon celebrating her 25 years of service as adviser of the Northwest Missouri State College ACE. One hundred eighteen active members, alumni, and guests were present.

The present and former members of the Northwest Missouri State College ACE presented Miss Millikan with a life membership in ACEI. Many congratulatory letters and telegrams were received on this silver anniversary that marked both the 25 years of serv-

ice of Miss Millikan and the 25 years of work by this ACE group.

The International Association was represented at the luncheon by Jennie Wahlert of St. Louis, Missouri. Miss Wahlert brought to the luncheon the congratulations and good wishes of the International Association.

### *January Branch Exchange*

Members of ACEI will want to give particular attention to the January *ACEI Branch Exchange*. This issue contains the tentative 1953-1955 *Plan of Action* for the Association, the report of the 1953 chairman of the nominating committee, and proposed constitutional changes. Study and discuss these matters and be prepared to take action at the 1953 Study Conference in Denver this April.

The January issue will be mailed to international members, to ACE branch officers, and in quantity to branch presidents who returned the special coupon to headquarters. Additional copies may be secured by writing to headquarters.

### *AASA Convention*

*Education of Young Children, the Administrator's Headache*, will be the subject for discussion at the luncheon meeting sponsored jointly by ACEI and the National Association for Nursery Education at the Atlantic City convention of the American Association of School Administrators, February 18, 1953. The luncheon will be held at the Madison Hotel. Tickets may be purchased in the auditorium office of AASA.

The program follows:

**Presiding:** Helen Bertermann, president, Association for Childhood Education International

**Presentation of Subject:** Roma Gans, professor of education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N. Y.

**Discussion:** Millie Almy, president, National Association for Nursery Education, New York, N. Y.

At the request of AASA, ACEI and NANE have suggested the topic, *Trends in the Education of Young Children*, for discussion in one of the sectional meetings, Thursday morning, February 19.



Members will want to call these meetings to the attention of superintendents who will be attending the convention and urge them to participate.

ACEI will maintain a booth at the exhibit hall and staff members will be available for conferences there. The director of the booth will be Alida Hisle of ACEI headquarters staff.

### *The Impressionable Years*

*The Impressionable Years* is the title of a film showing the services available to children in the public library. This film was produced by the State Department, directed by Peter Elgar, with the cooperation of the New York Public Library, represented by Frances Sayers, director of work for children.

This is a delightful story of young children who come to the library, the friendly welcome they receive, their enjoyment of the storytelling hour, and their pleasure in using the books provided for them.

*The Impressionable Years* may be purchased from the United World Films, 1445 Park Avenue, New York 29, N. Y. 16 mm. Price \$41.60.

### *National School Lunch Funds*

Providing children with fine exhibits of creative art is a big challenge, especially to rural and semi-rural areas. The New York State Art Teachers Association is sponsoring action to start an "artmobile" for school service. The state division of the American Association of University Women has voted their support of this action, and expressions of need and belief are pouring in from schools, galleries, professional groups, and educators.

Experimentation with techniques and operational patterns are necessary to establish mobile museum services. This plan is evolved around a program of teacher-selected exhibits, carefully integrated with school curricula, and using special ways of involving both school and community in the fun of artmobile visits.

Further information is available from the New York State Art Teachers Association, 21 Harrison Avenue, Glens Falls, New York.

### *National School Lunch Funds*

The Production and Marketing Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture has announced that approximately \$83,367,491 has been provided for this year's program; \$65,875,000 has been apportioned among the 48 states, District of Columbia,

and the territories of Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands on the basis of the number of children of school age and the per capita income. The schools are reimbursed in part for their local food purchases. In addition to the total fund, \$16,000,000 is available to the Department of Agriculture for the purchase and distribution to schools of foods which help meet the nutritional requirements of school children.

The program is administered jointly by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and state departments of education. Last year 1½ billion meals were served to 9.3 million children attending 56,000 participating schools.

### *International Children's Emergency Fund*

The American contribution to the U.N. Children's Fund is proportionately a far smaller sum than most Congressmen probably realized when they voted for it. Congress approved an appropriation of \$6,666,667 to enable the President to make contributions to the International Children's Emergency Fund until December 31, 1953. The President had requested \$16,481,000; the House voted 119 to 92 to reduce the appropriation, and the Senate sustained the cut.

The program of the Fund has shifted both in area and in type of project. The programs are now more concentrated in Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America and the type of the project has changed from mass feeding to more comprehensive maternal and child-health activities.

### *Korea Looks Ahead in Education*

In October, under the sponsorship of the Unitarian Service Committee, a team of six educators went to Korea for a term of nine months. This group, at the invitation of the minister of education, George Paik, will work with elementary teachers in many of the communities of South Korea. Mary Harbage, supervisor of elementary education, Akron, Ohio, and a member of ACEI, is chairman of the group.

At the request of the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, UNESCO has organized an international five-man education mission for Korea. The team will be in Korea for a period of six months for the purpose of developing a plan for the educational reconstruction and development of the Republic. Donald Cottrell, dean of the College of Education, Ohio State University, has been selected to direct the mission.

# Books for Children . . .

Editor, VERA PETERSEN

**SECRET OF THE ANDES.** By Ann Nolan Clark. Illustrated by Jean Charlot. New York: Viking, 18 E. 48th St., 1952. Pp. 130. \$2.50. There have always been choice books for children, as well as for adults, that have been read by relatively few. Ann Nolan Clark's *Secret of the Andes* is likely to be such a one unless those who bring books to children see to it that the stage is set by giving proper background and introduction to this eloquent tale of Inca royalty.

It is a slow moving story, in keeping with both its setting and development, but one well worth the time of the eight to twelve who will hear or read it.

Stunning color lithographs by Jean Charlot enhance the end papers and title page of this distinctive book.

**NEW WORLD FOR NELLIE.** By Rowland Emmett. Illustrated by the author. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 383 Madison Ave., 1952. Pp. 38. \$2. Brimming over with British wit and whimsy is *New World for Nellie*, a book to delight all ages. Nellie, a railroad engine from a forgotten corner of England, has for her driver, Albert Funnel, and for "guard-fireman-and-porter," Frederick Firedoor. These two are always getting into trouble with the station master for stopping the train to pick wild flowers for Nellie's window box.

Feeling that no one appreciates them, Albert and Frederick reconvert Nellie for aerial locomotion and fly her to America where the three of them have delightful escapades all the way from New York to Hollywood.

*New World for Nellie* is an exquisite book with its multitude of fragile pen lines and overlays of delicate water color.

The marvelously coordinated nonsense of both text and illustration is the work—though one is inclined to say play—of caricaturist Rowland Emmett of *Punch* magazine.

**THE WONDERFUL EGG.** By G. Warren Schloat, Jr. Illustrated by the author. New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 597 5th Ave., 1952. Pp. 45. \$2.25. Teachers in the primary grades will be grateful for this informative picture book about eggs and

chickens. Of particular interest to young children will be the life-size photographs showing eight consecutive stages in the hatching of a chick. Well-drawn diagrams show stages in the development of the embryo.

Among the photographs that complete the showing of the life cycle of a chicken are some very fascinating ones. One pictures a hen with the amount of food, gravel, and water that she will need in one day. Another shows a hen with 310 eggs, the number she laid in one year.

There is information on modern care and marketing of eggs and a final chapter showing a number of ways children can prepare eggs for eating.

**THE BLACK SOMBRERO.** By Nanda Ward. Illustrated by Lynd Ward. New York: Ariel Books, 41 E. 50th St., 1952. Pp. 29. \$1.75. Young urban cowboys, of four to seven, recently bedecked with new boots, chaps, and holsters from under their Christmas trees, will be delighted to meet Johnson, "the best roping and branding cowboy" of the western foothills.

Johnson's prize possession, his black sombrero, is whisked away by a mischievous wind, and before he can recover the hat it has served as a roof for the entrance of a prairie dog's den, as a bathtub for a rattlesnake, and as a nest for a family of young rabbits.

Here is a first book from a young new author—Nanda Ward. Her story is greatly enhanced by the excellent illustrations of her father, artist Lynd Ward.

**THE BEARS ON HEMLOCK MOUNTAIN.**

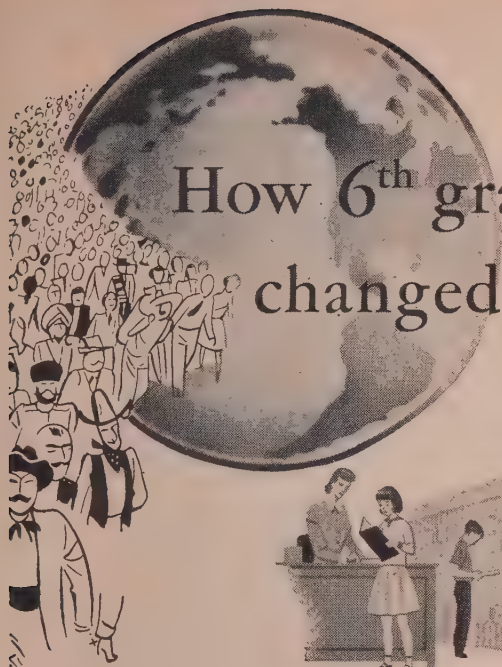
By Alice Dalgliesh. Illustrated by Helen Sewell. New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 597 5th Ave., 1952. Pp. 58. \$2.

Here is an unusually fine story for reading aloud. Written in a simple style and well polished this "small tall tale" will delight the young from six to ten. It is divided into ten short chapters, but there will be no such thing as stopping until one has read the whole book.

Eight-year-old Jonathan, who declared "he would rather see a bear than anything in the world" encounters several, much to his fright, while coming home alone one night over Hemlock Mountain. With remarkably quick thinking he hides himself from the bears until his father and uncles arrive to rescue him.

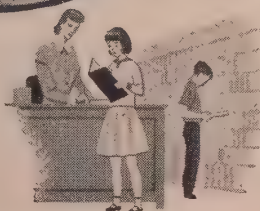
Helen Sewell's well-designed illustrations  
(Continued on page 240)





# How 6<sup>th</sup> graders changed "the world"

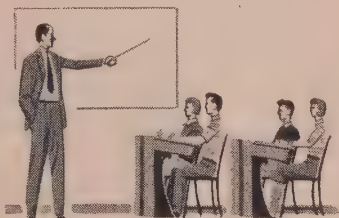
"The World" was ready to go to press! The experts had checked and re-checked every idea, every fact, every word in the colorful new 32-page article on "The World." But World Book's editor felt that the illustrations, which are so vital to the article, should be previewed by boys and girls in the classroom.



**So the managing editor  
went to school**

...along with the World Book art director. The sixth grade looked, listened and made helpful suggestions. "That page is too crowded," one boy said, and the

artist suggested what to do about it. The editor showed two diagrams on "How Climate Affects Man" and the class decided which they liked better. And so it was that "The World" was changed—by some alert sixth graders in an Illinois town!



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## Books for Children

(Continued from page 238)

in blue and black complement the story to make this a distinctive book.

### MISS FLORA McFLIMSEY'S BIRTHDAY.

By Mariana. Illustrated by the author. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Inc., 419 Fourth Ave., 1952. Pp. 34. \$1.25. Miss Flora McFlimsey, the lovable old doll that was brought down from an attic to give joy on a Christmas Eve (*Miss Flora McFlimsey's Christmas Eve*, Lothrop, 1950) is now in her fourth festive volume and certainly not wearing thin! On the contrary, there is every indication that this will be the children's favorite of the series.

In *Miss Flora McFlimsey's Birthday*, Mariana has illustrated exactly the parts one wants most to see. Here is a cozy little story, tumbling along on a cloud of imagination, but convincingly written. There is just enough suspense to give zest to the climax.

It is a welcome addition to the few books we have about this all-important day for our four- to seven-year-olds.

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**BUFFALO HARVEST.** By Glen Rounds. Illustrated by the author. New York: Holiday House, 8 W. 13th St., 1952. Pp. 141. \$2.25.

It is gratifying, in the heap of "would be grown-up" books published for children from eight to twelve, to find a volume of such fine format as *Buffalo Harvest*.

This informative book, written in ten short chapters, is entirely without direct discourse and is therefore not apt to be chosen as free reading by the average child. It promises, however, to be a choice volume for reference reading by all intermediate groups.

Glen Rounds has drawn, very expressively with pen and ink, the many illustrations for his text. There is a whisp of humor in most of the drawings that dawn on one as he sizes up the culture of the Plains Indians and inevitably compares it with his own.

**PERCY, POLLY, AND PETE.** By Clare Newberry. Illustrated by the author. New York: Harper, 49 E. 33rd St., 1952. Pp. 26. \$2.

Sharing the spotlight with Clare Newberry's inimitable cats in a new volume, is the artist's own little daughter who calls herself Shasha. Shasha, who was "rough on toys" at two, was equally "rough on kittens. . . . She held them too much, she hugged them too tight, and she petted them too hard." One day, as a special treat, she even gave them a bath in the big bathtub!

Such uncertainties of life prompted Millie, the mother cat, to look for a new home but then came Shasha's third birthday and something wonderful happened. "Shasha was no longer a baby. She had turned into a little girl—a nice little girl." After seeing how her kittens were treated on this day, Millie decided to stay at Shasha's house. "And Millie does not worry any more. For Shasha is growing up. And so are Percy, Polly, and Pete."

Children from four to eight will be charmed by the account in both story and pictures of the birthday party. The appeal of this book, however, will not be limited to children, for adults will admire the draughtmanship employed in revealing the subtleties of these entrancing animals. Thomas Craven said in his introduction to Clare Newberry's *Drawing a Cat* (Studio, 1940):

"With a technique perfectly adapted to her subjects . . . she seizes on and preserves not only the posture and muscular action but the charm, the playfulness, and most important, the personality of cats."

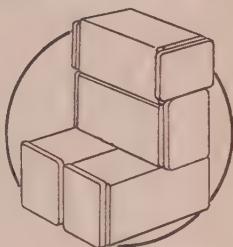


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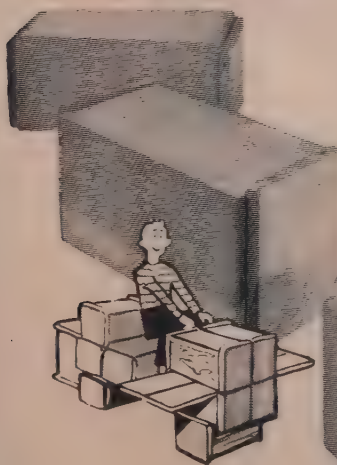
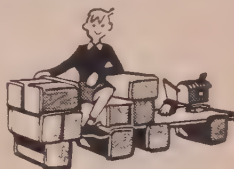
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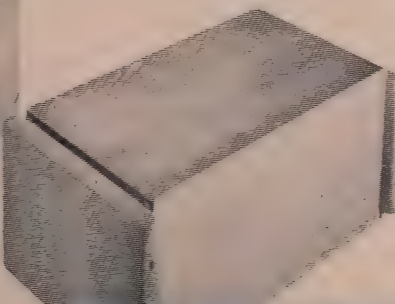
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## Books for Teachers . . .

Editors, WINIFRED E. BAIN  
and MARIE T. COTTER

### THE MANY LIVES OF MODERN WOMAN.

A Guide to Happiness in Her Complex Role.  
*By Sidonie M. Gruenberg and Hilda Sidney Krech. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1952. Pp. 255. \$3.*

Every thoughtful woman will enjoy reading this book and will get some good pointers from it. One feels that the authors, both intelligent women, enjoyed thinking, talking, and writing together about the concerns of intelligent women today. The senior member of the team, Mrs. Gruenberg, has been well known for years for her teaching and writing in the field of parent and child education. She writes this book with her daughter and seems to demonstrate a very satisfying fruition of parent-child relationships in her own family. This, at the outset, is heartening. Then as one reads one feels that the problems of

both younger and older women are fairly portrayed and well balanced; that from experience has come advice to women to see their lives as a continuing sequence conditioned at each stage by the fact and quality of womanhood.

The book is especially directed to women who are favored with good home background, education, and a chance to make choices. These women for the most part choose to fit themselves for work outside the home, then (as if by surprise) they marry and have children. Here then early in adulthood a woman faces several of her many lives: the essential woman that she is, the worker, the wife, the mother, the housekeeper. There is no doubt that the roles of wife and mother are the favored choice of such women but the chores of housekeeping—though worthy—are often irksome, sometimes frustrating. The frustrations arise not only from sheer physical fatigue but also from the fact that until now women of this type have set their sights on other goals and pursuits in their college study and in their “career” activities.

(Continued on page 244)

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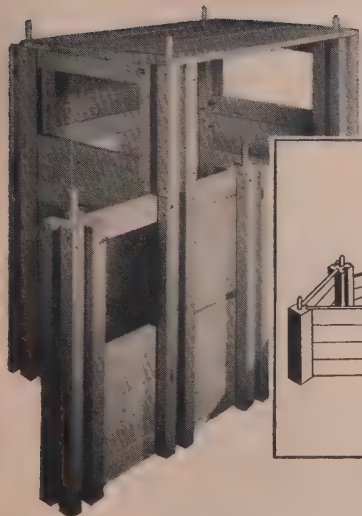
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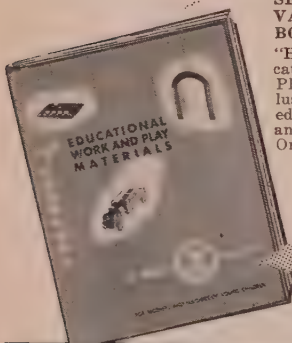


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## Books for Teachers . . .

(Continued from page 242)

The switch over to all absorbing domesticity seems both necessary and rewarding when the children are little, but it shows up as hazardous when children grow older and both can and should be released from "momism." When children leave home and mothers find themselves in the "empty nest," women are confronted with still another life to live, one in which they often cast backward glances at the interesting and fruitful pursuits they surrendered in order to meet the exciting demands of early motherhood. The challenge obviously is for women to live each phase of their lives with clear insight into the progressive demands that will be made upon them due to their unique functions as women. Since the life cycle of women differs from that of men there is need for different orientation toward life though not fundamentally different education.

There is constant reference to the expectations that society has for women and how these complicate the several roles a woman plays. Due credit is given to the gains that have been made in emancipation of women. Then theories are advanced about the strains that have developed from the very freedom of choice (within feminine restrictions) that women enjoy. Cooperation not rivalry between men and women should be the rule.

There is nothing militant or crusading in this book. Both women and men will like it and may even enjoy reading it together. —W.E.B.

**OUR CHILDREN AND GOD.** By Mrs. Clarence H. Hamilton. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 724 N. Meridian St., 1952.

Pp. 218. \$2.50. This book argues no creed and no theology. Its message is a simple one—children need above all things to know they are loved and wanted. Without love, acceptance, and understanding children will suffer not only emotionally but physically and will become misfits in their social relationships. The person most able to handle life successfully, constructively, and fearlessly is the person who grows up in a family environment ruled by the spirit of unselfish love.

Love to Mrs. Hamilton is not solely the creation of human relationships. It is the greatest power for genuine well-being in our



experience, the channel through which we touch God.

The greatest joy of *Our Children And God* is not in the novelty and originality of the ideas. It is in the presentation of the ideas. The style is extremely readable and interesting. It is clear.

The ideas are positive and the many illustrations speak of experiences which promote successful living although the author deals with some of the greatest crises people face—birth, death, betrayal, prejudice.

*Our Children and God* is addressed to a particular group of people whom the author believes exert the most determining influence on the lives of children—parents. However, the significance of its message is not limited to parents. It is a book for anyone who lives with children for any part of the day or years.

Some readers will feel unwilling to use the book because several references are made to New Testament authors. Others will quarrel with its optimistic attitude about man's capacity to apprehend God in the ordinary round of daily living. To this reviewer the greatest limitation lies in its failure to include help for parents who were robbed of love in their own childhood and consequently have little to spare for their children. But fundamentally the point of the book is sound. We want our children to live useful, happy lives.

—Reviewed by GRACE STORMS, Division of Christian Education, Board of Home Missions of the Congregational Christian Churches, Boston.

**THE DISCIPLINE OF WELL-ADJUSTED CHILDREN.** By Grace Langdon and Irving W. Stout. New York: John Day Co., 210 Madison Ave., 1952. Pp. 244. \$3.75. This book is the second one about well-adjusted children by the same authors. In part it is based on a study of the same children as were included in *These Well-Adjusted Children*, (John Day Co., 1951. Reviewed in CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, Vol. 28, No. 2, Oct. 1951, p. 89.)

To the present account have been added 153 more children than had been studied when the earlier book was written making a total of 414, aged 5 to 22. This book, as the title implies, addresses itself to the problem of discovering, in the case of children who are recognized as well adjusted, what in their

home life has caused the good adjustment. It is based on interviews with parents.

The sampling of families having these well-adjusted children showed great diversity in practically every external respect. The authors could find no relationship between the adjustment of children and such factors as size of family, numerical position of the child in relation to siblings, family income, education, occupation or national origin of parents, employment of mothers, home ownership, size of home, room of one's own or shared quarters for the children. Stepparents, foster parents, and grandparents of illegitimate and orphaned children were found among those bringing up these youngsters.

Yet it is abundantly clear that the children were being brought up actively and thoughtfully. There was nothing hit or miss in the process. The picture is one of active, alert children living in homes where vigorous life is going on and where they belong as loved and wanted participants.

The section headings are quotes from parent testimony and are suggestive principles of discipline: "Children need bringing up—they can't just grow;" "You have to keep busy at it but it does not have to be a big problem;" "It must be built on happy home life;" "It takes understanding and compromise;" "The question of punishment always comes up;" "There are so many things to learn—for all of us;" "Discipline goes on all the time just naturally." Each section includes pertinent stories of family life that make interesting and significant reading.

As background for understanding the parent's views on discipline, the trends of thought on the subject as gleaned from the literature of the past 70 years—1880-1950—are included. This shows a steady trend toward free, permissive discipline, respect for the individual as a person, authority vested in principle rather than in person, constructive activity with guidance and self-discipline replacing punishment. With this has been increasing emphasis on the well-being of children in family and community relationships and the importance of their affectionate identification in these groups.

One chapter applies principles of discipline to work in schools. Hence teachers as well as parents will find the book immensely helpful.—W.E.B.

# Bulletins and Pamphlets

Editor, MAY I. YOUNG

## HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND SEX.

By Lester A. Kirkendall. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 57 W. Grand Ave., 1952. Pp. 49. 40¢. A straightforward and comprehensive discussion of sex education—sex in its broadest sense. So, the beginnings of such education start shortly after birth and develop normally as the child grows. Mr. Kirkendall shows how children may be helped to have healthy attitudes toward sex and to manage their problems wisely.—Reviewed by ALICE K. LIVERIGHT, principal, Logan School, Philadelphia.

DISCIPLINE IN OUR SCHOOLS. Philadelphia Suburban School Study Council, Helen Huus, coordinator. Philadelphia: Educational Service Bureau, University of Pennsylvania, 1952. Pp. 32. 50¢. For parents who feel that the schools are not properly disciplining their—or the neighbor's—children, this pamphlet shows how self-discipline is

developed. Teachers, too, can profit from reviewing the various steps in development in such areas as self-reliance, consideration for others, respect for authority. Splendid pictures and attractive format add much to the well-organized material.

Classroom teachers have contributed largely to this pamphlet. Teachers of children 6 to 16 will find it very helpful, both for their own reference, and for parents.—M.I.Y.

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS GUIDE TO FREE CURRICULUM MATERIALS. 9th edition. Edited by John Guy Fowlkes and others. Randolph, Wis.: Educators Progress Service, 1952. Pp. 338. \$4.50.

FREE AND INEXPENSIVE LEARNING MATERIALS. 5th edition. Nashville, Tenn.: Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1952. Pp. 194. \$1. These two pamphlets offer almost limitless sources of reference material on hundreds of topics. They are so arranged that a teacher may turn directly to a specific topic for suggestions as to where to write for a variety of materials.

The Elementary Teachers Guide to Free Curriculum Materials includes several sample



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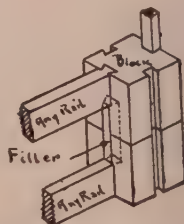
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units to show how the free materials may best be used. It also differentiates between items purely for teachers' reference and those for children's use, in many instances indicating levels of reading ability required.

The Peabody College pamphlet includes many materials of particular interest to secondary school ages. The cost of materials is limited to 50 cents or less.

These two pamphlets in every school library would give teachers more suggestions for resource materials than they could use—M.I.Y.

**YOUR CHILD AND RADIO, TV, COMICS AND MOVIES.** By Paul Witty and Harry Bricker. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 57 W. Grand Ave., 1952. Pp. 49, 40¢.

1. Children are going to look at movies and at TV, listen to radio, read comics.
2. At present, shows are geared more for adults than for children.
3. It is up to parents and teachers to get more programs specifically for children, and

to help children to become increasingly discriminating in their selections.

Interesting research studies substantiate the first two statements; suggestions as to "how" supplement the third.—Reviewed by ALICE K. LIVERIGHT.

**HOW CHILDREN LEARN TO READ.** By Helen K. Mackintosh. Washington, D. C.: Federal Security Agency, Bulletin No. 7, 1952. Pp. 16. 15¢. So much has been written in recent years on the teaching of reading that one may hesitate to recommend another reference. However, this pamphlet offers a very concise, clear statement of the early stages of reading, and a resume of the middle stages which should especially help teachers of grades 4, 5, and 6 to realize their responsibility for continuing the learning process in this field.

Experienced teachers would find the pamphlet a useful one in group discussions of their own reading problems. They could exchange ideas and practical suggestions based on the essentials laid down by Miss Mackintosh.—M.I.Y.

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Discusses the place of science in elementary education and the importance to everyone of the scientific method, and presents background material of great value to the classroom teacher. Suggestions for activities and a classification of content material are included.



# Over the Editor's Desk

## What About It?

While taking part in the Massachusetts State ACE meeting in September, I enjoyed their program which was concerned with television and radio. The question came up as to whether CHILDHOOD EDUCATION could have a review section on television and radio. Nancy Harper, Nursery Training School of Boston, writes "... couldn't that be done by radio and TV-conscious members of ACEI spotted throughout the country to cover all channels? It seemed to me in Philadelphia in the Spring that there were members from all areas just ready to go. And there is certainly one that you know of in Massachusetts."

Well, what about it? Let us know what you think, how it could be carried on, all suggestions welcomed. They will be presented to the Executive Board in April.

## Now Is The Time—

Time to sit down and write us a letter, note, or memo saying what you *have liked* in this year's issues of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, what you *would like* to see in next year's issues. The Editorial Board begins deliberations during this month of January.

## Colorado in Books

Of course we can't capture the real experience of going to colorful Colorado in books, but a few books with local color can help us see more and appreciate what we have seen.

We asked Lydia Lort, librarian in the Denver Public Schools, to recommend some books for our own reading list. We haven't space to list them all. Neither have we had time to read all those listed. But there is variety from which to choose.

Bromfield, Louis. *Colorado*. Harper. 1947. \$2.75.

Denver Post. *Rocky Mountain Empire*, edited by Elvon Howe. Doubleday. 1950. \$3. Revealing glimpses of the West in transition from old to new.

Fowler, Gene. *Timber Line*. Covici. 1933. \$3. The Story of the Denver Post.

Horner, J. W. *Silver Town*. Caxton. 1950. \$4.50. The story of Georgetown, Colorado.

Lavender, David. *Big Divide*. Doubleday. 1948. \$4.50.

Moody, Ralph. *Little Britches*. Norton. 1950. \$3.

—. *Man of the Family*. Norton. 1951. \$3. Both are autobiographical stories which portray with feeling and deep interest the life in a rural area adjacent to Denver.

Parkhill, Forbes. *Wildest of the West*. Holt. 1951. \$3.50.

Weber, Lenore M. *Meet the Malones*. Crowell. 1943. \$3. Mrs. Weber's stories for young people have enriched the material about Colorado. This is only one of her excellent books.

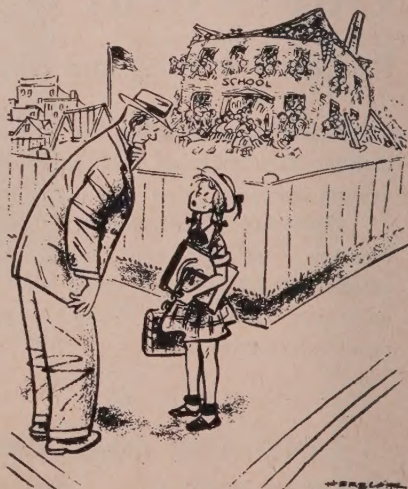
Williston, George F. *Here They Dug the Gold*. Reynal. 1946. \$3.50. An interesting record of Colorado's "mushroom days."

Wolle, Muriel S. *Stampede to Timberline*. University of Colorado, 763-16th St., Boulder, Colorado. 1949. \$7.50. The ghost towns and mining camps of Colorado.

## Crowding Brings Real Challenge

The cartoon makes us smile but matches some of the stories we have heard: "We have four sessions of kindergarten in the same classroom every day." "The kindergarten meets in a swimming pool." (Empty).

It certainly challenges us to evaluate the situations in which we are placing these children. What is happening to the children?



Herb Block in Washington Post.

"I'm in the Fourth Grade, Third Shift, Second Layer."



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